

The dynamics of feminisation

A corpus-based diachronic analysis of Dutch and German
feminising morphology

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I wanna thank me for doin' all this hard work

I wanna thank me for havin' no days off

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– Snoop Dogg

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Abbreviations

A	Affix	M	Male sex
ACC	Accusative	MASC	Masculine grammatical gender
ADJ	Adjective	MD	Middle Dutch
ADV	Adverb	MHG	Middle High German
BE	Belgium	MoD	Modern Dutch
CG	Corpus Gysseling	N	Noun
CMN	Corpus Middelnederlands	NEUT	Neuter grammatical gender
DAT	Dative	NL	Netherlands
DBNL	Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren	NOM	Nominative
DWDS	Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache	NP	Noun phrase
ENHG	Early New High German	OD	Old Dutch
F	Female sex	OHG	Old High German
FEM	Feminine grammatical gender	PIE	Proto-Indo-European
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany	PGM	Proto-Germanic
GDR	German Democratic Republic	PN	Personal noun
GEN	Genitive	PRO	Pronoun
LXM	Lexeme	S	Suffix
		UTR	Utrum
		V	Verb

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope and purpose

Variation in the use and characteristics of morphology with the function of marking a referent's sex on a personal noun is common in the Germanic languages. Personal nouns (henceforth PNs) can, for now, simply be defined as nouns with a human referent. These crosslinguistic differences in the use of feminising morphology are evident in the following examples from Dutch (1a) and German (1b), both of which contain a PN in reference to Michelle Obama.

- (1) a. Obama [...] toont zich daarbij zo'n geboren **verteller** dat
Obama ... shows herself with.that such.a.UTR born.UTR storyteller.UTR that
het publiek [...] aan haar gestifte lippen hangt.
the public ... on her painted lips hangs
'Obama reveals herself as a born storyteller, so that the public hangs on her every
word (lit. 'hangs on her painted lips').'

(HUMO, 7 May, 2020)

- b. Obama erweist sich auf den mehr als 500 Seiten als gute
Obama shows herself on the more than 500 pages as good.FEM
Erzählerin und als lebenskluge Person [...].
storyteller.FEM and as wise person ...
'Obama reveals herself as a good storyteller and a wise person on the more than
500 pages.'

(n-tv, 16 December, 2018)

In the above examples, a Flemish-Dutch and a German source both make use of exactly the same construction to refer to the same person with the name Obama. However, without recourse to contextual information, the referent is only unambiguously female in the German example, where the referent's female sex is marked by the morpheme *-in* in *Erzählerin* 'storyteller'. In the Dutch example, subsequent contextual information given in the subordinate clause dissolves the ambiguous reference caused by the PN *verteller* 'storyteller'. A sex-marked, feminised counterpart *vertelster* 'storyteller' exists but is not used here, which

leaves the option open that the referent of *verteller* ‘storyteller’ is male. Notwithstanding the possible ambiguity caused by the morphology of the PN, its non-feminised version is used. Feminisation is a subcategory of a phenomenon that has been called *motio* ‘movement’ in grammars since the 16th century (Doleschal 2015: 1165). In German, *motio* is still commonly known as *Movierung*: a morphological process with various formal exponents whose function is “die außersprachliche (kognitive) Kategorie ‚Geschlecht‘ zu versprachlichen”¹ (Doleschal 1992: 9). The broader term *Movierung* includes all morphological patterns that can be used to mark male or female sex on PNs, but since the marking of female sex heavily outweighs the marking of male sex in terms of frequency, it is often used as a *totum pro parte* for feminisation. The general subject of this study is to analyse, describe, and explain the intra- and extralinguistic developments that have resulted in examples such as the one in (1a) for Dutch and in (1b) for German.

Hardly any other linguistic feature directly expresses an intrinsic property of the identity of human beings like feminisation. Pollatschek (2020), for instance, reflects on this and adds that sex is thereby also linguistically made to be the most prominent identity category – ethnic affiliation, sexual orientation, or religion are not linguistically encoded. Since sex and gender have been much-discussed subjects in social debates, their linguistic reflexes have drawn and continue to draw significant public attention as well. Feminisation is a part of this, mainly because its omission in PNs in non-exclusively male contexts is heavily discussed in debates concerning gender-fair language use. While feminising morphology is sometimes omitted in semantically female contexts in Dutch (1a) – the discussion in the Dutch-speaking area is mostly centred on this observation – its omission in semantically non-male contexts (i.e., generic or mix-gender contexts) in German has been the point of focus of feminist language reform from the 1970s onwards (cf. Trömel-Plötz 1978; Pusch 1979, 1984). This feminist linguistic reform is associated with West Germany. Many authors have noted that feminisation was (and is) less common in the former GDR, where the generic use of non-feminised forms was prescribed as an emancipatory instrument (Barz 1985; Diehl 1992; Sobotta 1997, 2000, 2002). Moreover, it is a common but empirically understudied

¹“to linguistically express the extralinguistic (cognitive) category sex” [N.V.]

observation that stable and productive feminisation systems correlate with the diachronic preservation of a grammatical masculine/feminine distinction (Nübling 2000: 215; Doleschal 2015: 1165).² In Dutch, at least in northern varieties and thereby Standard Dutch, this distinction has been given up and merged into one common-gender category, the *utrum*. In German, it has become evident that a well established feminisation system paves the way for other features of language use in which it is used as a basis, namely forms coding non-binary gender identities. The “gendering” of PNs in German builds on the feminisation system: in between the masculine base and the feminising suffix *-in*, a diacritic is added to signal non-binarity, e.g., *Autor*innen* or *Autor:innen* ‘authors’.³ Although these controversial forms are not part of this study, its main research subject, feminisation, does tie in with them, and understanding the status of feminisation may help explain why some linguistic communities resort to these kinds of strategies in the first place. Some answers have already been provided to this question, although empirical research is overdue. Since the late 1970s, a vast literature has arisen on the subject of feminisation. Two groups oppose each other here. On the one hand, feminist language reform has attempted to draw attention to sexist patriarchal structures behind many forms of language use. As the name suggests, feminist language reform seeks to deconstruct linguistic structures that are considered sexist. Such attempts have been more or less successful, and they have led to controversy. From the outset, opponents of linguistic reform have in return focused on the meaning of feminised and non-feminised forms. In many publications, feminisation is analysed from a formal-structuralist perspective, concentrating on a supposed morphosemantic markedness (cf. Jakobson 1957) of feminised forms, as opposed to their non-feminised and supposedly unmarked counterparts (cf. Kalverkämper 1979a and in his tradition, among others and exemplary, Gauger 2017; Wegener 2017; Eisenberg 2020). For Dutch this theoretical approach is common in literature

²Next to German, Germanic languages that have preserved a masculine/feminine gender distinction and a (relatively) active feminisation system include Luxemburgish (Döhmer 2022), North- and Sater Frisian (Wolf: in preparation), Yiddish (Birnbaum 2016), and feminisation tendencies in Icelandic (Nübling 2001; Gunnarsdóttir Grönberg 2002; Friðriksson 2017).

³Outside of the Germanic languages, this is also common. Strategies of gender-fair non-binary language use are established in Spanish (Guerrero Salazar 2020; Papadopoulos 2021), French (Elmiger 2022), and Slovene (Kores & Popič 2018; Wtorkowska 2020), to name a few. Feminisation itself is on the rise in, e.g., Polish (Kielkiewicz-Janowiak 2019; Wtorkowska 2020).

covering feminisation, but much less controversially discussed (cf. van Marle 1984; van Santen & de Vries 1981; van Santen 1996, 2003). Its widely accepted status⁴ in literature on Dutch is likely not coincidental, and the factors contributing to this are investigated here. The cognitive sciences have zoomed in on this idea of a marked and an unmarked form and have tapped in to the cognitive representations of (non-)feminised items through behavioural and online experimental research. Specifically, the so-called generic masculine – grammatically masculine forms which are used in a non-sex-specific context – has received much attention. There is wide consensus here that the structuralist argument of semantic “unmarkedness” of the generically intended masculine does not conform to its cognitive representation, at least not in a sex-based gender system like the German one (Braun et al. 1998; Stahlberg & Sczesny 2001; Stahlberg et al. 2001; Gygax et al. 2008; De Backer & De Cuypere 2012; Vervecken et al. 2013; Vervecken & Hannover 2015; Kollmayer et al. 2018; Gygax et al. 2021). These scientific approaches to feminisation are embedded in a 40-year-old debate which focuses on gender-fair language use, and are attributed to or associated with the linguistic subfield of gender linguistics (cf., for instance, the introductory standard work, *Genderlinguistik*, by Kotthoff & Nübling 2018).

Four decades after the subject became the linguistic focus of attention for feminism, extensive research from a usage-based perspective and from corpus linguistics has failed to materialise. Nevertheless, a methodological shift towards this approach is desirable, because structuralist analysis focusing on semantic markedness has always had a normative-prescriptive tone, as it originated as a reaction against feminist language reform. As Motschenbacher (2010: 94) argues, “markedness is a tool for establishing linguistic manifestations of normative ideologies.” The purpose here is to refrain from any moral claims,⁵ drawing from the idea that formal descriptions of feminisation, and especially the forms in which it does not occur, fail to cover the complexity of the process. Hence, the perspective on feminisation here is usage-based and contrastive, and thereby “de-essentialises” (cf. Motschenbacher 2016) former normative descriptions. I am thus concerned with the question of what motivates the

⁴Naturally, this acceptance is also not absolute, cf. Section 4.3.

⁵For a discussion on the morals of politically correct language use, cf. Stefanowitsch (2018).

use or omission of feminising morphology on PNs crosslinguistically and diachronically, and hence, how the various exponents of its use (as in the above examples) can be explained. One should thereby bear in mind that the resulting account of what feminisation is, and why it takes the shape it does, depends on many factors that play a role in discourse. Broadly speaking, these factors are situated on three different levels: the first factor is an intrinsic part of each different system, namely grammatical gender. The second is language policy and language reform, which actively pursue a change in the use of feminising morphology. The third factor is an overarching complex of various semantic and pragmatic considerations which may impact the use of feminising morphology to various degrees. All factors will be further elaborated in the following sections and empirically investigated in three different corpus-based case studies, starting with a broader study, and each time narrowing down the investigative scope. The first study will explore the formal characteristics of the Dutch and German feminisation systems in various text genres (newspapers, chats, and tweets). Thus, it will provide an overview of the different feminisation patterns on different levels of language use. One particular text genre will further serve as the basis for the second and largest corpus study, namely newspapers. The purpose of this second study is to track the use of feminisation throughout the course of nearly two centuries. Newspapers are particularly suitable for this, because they make use of a standard and are subject to various guidelines that sometimes explicitly mention feminisation. Therefore, East and West German newspapers can be investigated contrastively with regards to different emancipatory views on the use of feminising morphology. On the level of grammatical gender, Dutch and Belgian newspapers can be investigated contrastively, because the masculine/feminine gender distinction is preserved in Belgian Dutch varieties only. Data from newspapers will thus not only be used to gauge the impact of language policies that aim at gender-fair language use, but also to assess which contexts are prone or averse to feminisation. This second study will concentrate on feminisation in female, human reference. The third case study will zoom in on feminisation in one particular context, namely in reference to inanimate entities that are grammatically feminine (e.g., German *die Partei ist Gewinnerin* ‘the party is the winner’).

The focus then shifts towards the limits of feminisation – since feminisation covers more than human reference only, where does it end in the inanimate domain?

1.2 Preliminary remarks on terminology

As feminisation is not a common process in English, the English translations of PNs on which female sex is marked (as in *vertelster* and *Erzählerin*) will be labeled .F (as in ‘storyteller.F’) in glosses. The label stands for the presence of a feminising morpheme, which carries the semantic feature [+female]. Translations of non-feminised nouns (*verteller*, *Erzähler*) will receive the label .¬F (‘storyteller.¬F’), whereby the symbol ¬ stands for the absence of a feminising morpheme. A non-feminised item will not be labeled with a code for male sex (M), because exclusively male semantics are neither a crosslinguistically valid feature of non-feminised items, nor are they diachronically stable (as will be demonstrated particularly in Section 2.2). To bypass this issue and the surrounding discussion in each glossing of a PN, non-feminised items will thus be labeled as not having a feminising morpheme and exclusively female semantics. As opposed to these abbreviations, the labels FEM and MASC will stand for the grammatical categories feminine and masculine. While in German, sex-marked PNs are always feminine, in (Standard) Dutch they belong to the same gender category as their non-feminised counterparts, the *utrum* class (UTR). Hence, feminised and non-feminised PNs will also not be labeled based on their grammatical features, because these are not crosslinguistically valid.

Feminisation is an instance of differentiation (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 15-18), a linguistic phenomenon which in gender studies is commonly known as *doing gender*: “doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine “natures”” (West & Zimmerman 1987: 126). This is reminiscent of Pollatschek’s account of feminisation in German, which is essentially a linguistic expression of a cognitive category that seems important enough to encode it in pieces of language in which it might not even play a relevant contextual role. Here, sex differentiations on a conceptual level are enshrined in

linguistic forms. By contrast, the use of generically intended non-feminised forms is also called neutralisation (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 15-18), and it is an example of linguistic *undoing gender* (Hirschauer 1994):

Ohne eine solche Aktualisierung der Geschlechterdifferenz, die aus Gelegenheiten situative Wirklichkeiten macht, ereignet sich eher ein praktiziertes ‘Absehen’ von ihr, eine Art *soziales* Vergessen, durch die sich die Charakterisierung von Geschlecht als ‘seen but unnoticed feature’ von Situationen verschiebt: nicht von etwas Notiz zu nehmen, ist selbst eine konstruktive Leistung. Ich schlage vor, sie ‘*undoing gender*’ zu nennen.⁶

(Hirschauer 1994: 678)

As Hirschauer states, thus, even undoing gender is a “constructive performance”, and it will become clear in the following chapters that on the linguistic level, neutralisation of PNs, or undoing gender, is used as a conscious strategy in gender-fair language as well. In the context of this study, feminisation, differentiation, and doing gender will be used synonymously, as well as the terms neutralisation and undoing gender in the case of non-feminised items.

Lastly, regional variation in Dutch will be a prominent feature throughout this work. More specifically, differences between Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch with regard to their gender systems will be dealt with. It should be stressed that these national varieties are not considered absolute as clearly defined linguistic areas. In other words, the use of national denominators is not meant to artificially create a linguistic distinction on the basis of national borders. Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch will thus be used as terms in reference to larger language areas sharing similar characteristics, broadly speaking. This distinction is mostly of a practical nature, because the corpora used are not dialect corpora which allow for the study of gradual variation. Moreover, language use in newspapers, the main data sources in this study, is standard-oriented. In the case of Dutch, standard language in Flanders is

⁶“Without such an actualisation of sex differences, which turns occasions into situational realities, a practiced ‘refraining’ from it occurs, a kind of social forgetting, through which the characterisation of sex shifts to ‘seen but unnoticed feature’ of situations: Not taking notice of something is itself a constructive performance. I suggest to call it *undoing gender*.” [N.V.]

modeled after the much older Netherlandic standard, but has its own peculiarities, mainly on the phonological and lexical levels (Janssens & Marynissen 2005: 4.4.7). Based on the fact that newspapers are nationally published and make use of a national standard, a broad North/South distinction will be made, whereby the southern part comprises the gender peculiarities of Belgian Dutch varieties. As is customary, the names Belgian Dutch and Flemish will be used interchangeably. Since the Netherlands-Belgian distinction generates a north-south division, Flemish/Belgian Dutch will also be referred to as Southern Dutch (varieties), and Netherlandic Dutch as Northern Dutch (varieties).

1.3 Structure

The purpose of the study is to offer insight into the structure of the feminisation systems in Dutch and German, both on a descriptive formal level and on an explanatory level by resorting to the empirical study of language use. In the theoretical part, Chapter 2 will cover some basic concepts with which feminisation is linked or on which it is based. A working definition of personal nouns will be offered, and the usage-based framework in which the study is embedded will be introduced, next to the notions of animacy and referentiality. In Chapter 3, feminisation will be analysed with regard to its status in the Dutch and German grammatical systems. Its relation to grammatical gender will be discussed, as well as its status as a complex of word-formation processes, which can either give way to lexicalisation when they become unproductive, or may display some functions and formal features that they share with inflection. Prototypical characteristics of word formation and inflections, and their overlapping domains, will be discussed. Some criteria introduced here will show where the investigative gaps in feminisation research are situated, and these gaps will be filled in the empirical part of this work. Chapter 4 will address metalinguistic thought on feminisation, in particular in the Dutch- and German-speaking areas. Here, as well, historical contexts will be described, along with current lines of thought in which they are embedded. Concrete language policies, which stem from dominant theories concerning feminisation and gender-fair (or gender-sensitive) language use, will be introduced in this chapter.

The empirical part of will be covered by Chapters 5 to 7. To capture the complexity of feminisation, it will consist of three case studies. The first, preliminary corpus study in Chapter 5 will be concerned with the productivity of feminising morphology in Dutch and German. It aims to describe the respective systems contrastively and diachronically. While the historical development and use of the feminising suffix *-in* in German has been well described in literature (cf. among others Wellmann 1975; Oksaar 1976; Doleschal 1992; Kopf 2022, 2023), the Dutch system has only been described on a more superficial level (cf. the overviews by Koelmans 1978; Mooijaart 1991). To my knowledge, there are no in-depth descriptions of or quantitative research on (the productivity of) the different Dutch feminisation processes and/or how they relate to each other and to different contexts of use. Such a description will be offered, in contrast to the German feminisation system and as a basis for the corpus study on the use of feminising morphology in news media, i.e., standard language. Further building on corpus material, Chapter 6 will contain a large corpus study on the use of feminising morphology in the last two centuries in a total of 18 different Dutch, Flemish, and German news media sources. By means of a predicative construction in which the referent is female, developments within the respective feminisation systems will be traced. The chapter will build on the results from the explorative and descriptive corpus study in Chapter 5 to demonstrate how concrete language policies can change language use, which in turn affects productivity patterns. Chapter 6 will cover the use of PNs in reference to human beings only. Lastly, in Chapter 7 will explore the limits of feminisation. Since feminisation occurs not only in reference to human beings, but also (occasionally or regularly) in reference to inanimate concepts and objects, the chapter again offers an explanatory insight into the use of feminising morphology within these contexts. Because there are three different case studies, all corpus-based, corpora and method will be described at the beginning of each empirical chapter. A conclusion and further outlook is offered in Chapter 8.

2 Personal nouns and feminisation

This chapter is dedicated to answering three rather simple introductory questions. What are personal nouns, what is feminisation, and how can we investigate feminisation in personal nouns? It draws from previous research on the topic, and introduces some contexts and cases which are relevant to feminisation. The chapter is meant as an exploration of the main object of study, although some of the examples presented here are found in corpora. These examples are merely meant to demonstrate that certain contexts *exist*, and that this existence needs to be accounted for when sketching a picture of what feminisation in Dutch and German actually is. In doing so, large corpora were used to retrieve examples – they are not to be viewed as having a quantitative claim. These corpora are SketchEngine subcorpora, namely nlTenTen20 and the parallel deTenTen20. The former contains 6.8 billion tokens, the latter 21 billion.⁷ They contain texts only from the Internet⁸ and are automatically tagged. Furthermore, they cover many regions in which Dutch and German are spoken (both European and non-European), with an overrepresentation of the Dutch top-level domain (.nl, 80,3%) in the Dutch corpus and the German top-level domain (.de, 76%) in the German corpus.

2.1 Personal nouns: a delimitation and a working definition

So far, personal nouns have been defined as nouns that denote human beings. This definition includes nouns of the type *schrijver/Autor* ‘author.→F’, which are commonly feminised in both Dutch and German, but also allows for nouns such as *lid/Mitglied* ‘member’ and *domkop/Dummkopf* ‘dummy’ to be analysed as PNs. Still, while the former seem suitable candidates for feminisation, the latter seem intuitively less feminisable. Moreover, the probability of a noun with a human referent being feminised can vary crosslinguistically. By way of illustration, Table 2.1 gives an impression of the occurrence of a range of Dutch PNs as lemmas in comparison with their feminised counterparts in nlTenTen20. The table is merely

⁷As of November, 2023.

⁸Corpus information and text classification available via www.sketchengine.eu/nltenten-dutch-corpus/ and www.sketchengine.eu/nltenten-german-corpus/ [Accessed 06-09-2023].

meant as an overview for the use of feminisation morphology in PNs in terms of frequency in a large corpus; the data was only collected by way of exploration. Note that this data does not give any information about how and in which contexts they are used.

TYPE	f_{¬FEM}	f_{FEM}	TL	¬F:F
<i>verpleger/-ster</i>	5.710	17.778	‘nurse’	1 : 3
<i>leraar/-es</i>	229.792	17.571	‘teacher’	13 : 1
<i>docent/-e</i>	176.205	10.826	‘lecturer’	16 : 1
<i>blogger/-ster</i>	22.496	1.337	‘blogger’	17 : 1
<i>politicus/-a</i>	200.443	8.731	‘politician’	23 : 1
<i>voogd/-es</i>	35.920	739	‘guardian’	49 : 1
<i>leerling/-e</i>	226.300	3.433	‘pupil’	66 : 1
<i>babysitter/-ster</i>	2.263	13	‘babysitter’	174 : 1
<i>gast/-e</i>	178.041	870	‘guest’	205 : 1
<i>vluchteling/-e</i>	154.418	738	‘refugee’	209 : 1
<i>gijzelaar/-es/-ster</i>	8.433	7	‘hostage’	1.205 : 1
<i>dokter/-es</i>	176.467	80	‘doctor’	2.206 : 1
<i>kapitein/-e</i>	77.933	12	‘captain’	6.494 : 1
<i>klant/-e</i>	1.824.845	222	‘client’	8.220 : 1
<i>burgemeester/-es</i>	442.835	43	‘mayor’	10.298 : 1
<i>arts/-e</i>	560.116	54	‘doctor’	10.373 : 1
<i>minister/-in/-es</i>	1.009.876	14	‘minister’	72.134 : 1
<i>manager/-ster/-es/-in</i>	338.262	3	‘manager’	112.754 : 1
<i>steenhouwer/-ster</i>	3.770	8	‘stonemason’	471 : 0
<i>domkop/-?</i>	947	0	‘dummy’	947 : 0
<i>ingenieur/-?</i>	55.110	0	‘engineer’	55.110 : 0
<i>professor/-?</i>	119.102	0	‘professor’	110.102 : 0
<i>type/-?</i>	699.356	0	‘type’	699.356 : 0
<i>persoon/-?</i>	1.820.323	0	‘person’	1.820.323 : 0
<i>lid/-?</i>	2.472.179	0	‘member’	2.472.179 : 0
<i>mens/-?</i>	7.354.813	0	‘person, human’	7.354.813 : 0

Table 2.1: Dutch nouns with human referents in the nlTenTen20 corpus. Absolute frequencies after each noun are listed, as well as the ratio of non-feminised nouns to their feminised counterparts (e.g., *leraar* ‘teacher.¬F’ occurs four times more often than *lerares* ‘teacher.F’). Nouns are listed as lemmas.

Apart from *verpleegster* ‘nurse.F’, the non-feminised lemma always outweighs its feminised counterpart. In the case of *verpleegster*, an overrepresentation of women in this occupational role may contribute to its frequency. While men can also be overrepresented in some of the

listed occupations and roles in the table, the overall dominance of non-feminised forms is without a doubt mainly related to the fact that masculine PNs are often used generically, especially in the plural (e.g., *de docenten* ‘the lecturers.¬F’ in reference to a mixed-gender group of lectureres). The frequencies of the lemmas in the table do not offer any information about their use as generic or specific nouns. Nevertheless, frequencies of feminised nouns in relation to the frequencies of their non-feminised bases differ per PN and a smaller ratio of feminised to non-feminised nouns points to a more established and frequent use of the feminised PN.

A wide range of nouns that, based on their occurrence in German in Table 2.2, should be suitable candidates to be feminised, are done so only in rare instances, or not at all. While German nouns such as *Ministerin* ‘minister.F’ and *Professorin* ‘professor.F’ seem to be well established, they only rarely, if at all, occur as feminised forms in the Dutch corpus. Dutch and German do share a common reluctance to feminise forms such as *type/Typ* ‘type’, *domkop/Dummkopf* ‘dummy’ or the class nouns *mens/Mensch* ‘human, person’ and *persoon/Person* ‘person’. Even though this observation may seem logical, the Dutch nouns *professor* ‘professor.¬F’ and *ingenieur* ‘engineer.¬F’ are not feminised in a corpus of nearly six billion tokens either. In terms of frequency, this puts them into the same class of nouns as *type* and *domkop*. Moreover, even *Typ* is (sparsely) feminised in the German corpus, which makes it a suitable candidate to join the class of *Professor* and *Ingenieur*. These token frequencies demonstrate that there does not seem to be a crosslinguistically valid rule that defines the limits of feminisation of nouns with human referents. In view of the contrastive examination of feminisation later on, crosslinguistically valid criteria that define feminisable PNs are needed. While such criteria may seem trivial at first – the noun *type* is clearly etymologically an inanimate rather than a personal noun – the above observations from the Dutch and German corpora do pose a theoretical issue for the empirical analysis in Chapter 6. They challenge the idea that either every PN is feminisable (which Dutch *professor* contradicts), or that a class of PNs exists that are not feminisable at all (which German *Typin* contradicts). Moreover, a non-feminisable noun may diachronically migrate

TYPE	$f_{\neg FEM}$	f_{FEM}	TL	$\neg F:F$
<i>Dozent·in</i>	230.060	53.370	‘lecturer’	4 : 1
<i>Krankenpfleger·in</i>	31.966	7.434	‘nurse’	4 : 1
<i>Lehrer·in</i>	1.238.377	295.652	‘teacher’	4 : 1
<i>Minister·in</i>	374.351	94.801	‘minister’	4 : 1
<i>Blogger·in</i>	96.416	18.786	‘blogger’	5 : 1
<i>Babysitter·in</i>	21.244	3.708	‘babysitter’	6 : 1
<i>Bürgermeister·in</i>	1.065.171	105.043	‘mayor’	10 : 1
<i>Professor·in</i>	921.521	89.779	‘professor’	10 : 1
<i>Arzt·in</i>	2.237.406	153.867	‘doctor’	15 : 1
<i>Politiker·in</i>	913.940	54.794	‘politician’	17 : 1
<i>Manager·in</i>	589.194	28.756	‘manager’	20 : 1
<i>Kapitän·in</i>	281.362	10.313	‘captain’	27 : 1
<i>Ingenieur·in</i>	311.551	11.375	‘engineer’	27 : 1
<i>Kunde·in</i>	4.850.854	115.867	‘client’	42 : 1
<i>Steinmetz·in</i>	37.391	245	‘stonemason’	153 : 1
<i>Vormund·in</i>	29.204	131	‘guardian’	223 : 1
<i>Laie·in</i>	234.130	523	‘layperson’	448 : 1
<i>Vorstand·in</i>	1.002.370	1.896	‘board member’	529 : 1
<i>Dummkopf·in</i>	15.094	6	‘dummy’	2.516 : 1
<i>Mitglied·in</i>	4.118.248	1.318	‘member’	3.125 : 1
<i>Typ·in</i>	1.050.642	190	‘type’	5.530 : 1
<i>Lehrling·in</i>	113.280	13	‘pupil’	8.714 : 1
<i>Mensch·in</i>	14.766.303	1.428	‘person’	10.341 : 1
<i>Gast·in</i>	32.711.564	2.759	‘guest’	11.856 : 1
<i>Star·in</i>	801.062	55	‘star’	14.565 : 1
<i>Flüchtling·in</i>	793.724	45	‘refugee’	17.638 : 1
<i>Geisel·in</i>	72.637	3	‘hostage’	24.212 : 1
<i>Person·in</i>	5.823.223	32	‘person’	181.976 : 1

Table 2.2: German nouns with human referents in the deTenTen20 corpus. Absolute frequencies after each noun are listed, as well as the ratio of non-feminised nouns to their feminised counterparts. Nouns are listed as lemmas.

toward the domain of feminisable nouns. The following sections will therefore, based on the observations made here, theoretically deal with the question of what it means for a noun to be feminisable. In the following sections two subtypes of personal nouns are described in order to narrow down the working definition of PNs for the remainder of this work. It will be shown that these two subtypes, hybrid nouns and epicene nouns, differ from the PNs of interest in that they are unlikely candidates for feminisation.

2.1.1 Hybrid nouns

In both Dutch and German, the main gender-assignment rule for PNs is that they are spread over non-neuter gender categories. If both the masculine and the feminine are available, then PNs are spread over these two categories in accordance with the sex of their referents. This is known as the *Genus-Sexus-Prinzip* “gender-sex-principle” (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 73), or as sex-based gender (Corbett 1991).⁹ If these categories are no longer available,¹⁰ then feminised and non-feminised PNs share one common-gender class. However, there is a discrepancy in some animate nouns between the referent’s sex and their grammatical gender. In this class of nouns, the referent’s sex is lexically determined, but its grammatical gender does not run parallel to it. This is what Zubin & Köpcke (2009: 256) dub the “norm-divergence-principle”, with the norm being that for human referents, grammatical gender coincides with semantic gender, as mentioned above. If this is not the case, as it is in some neuter nouns denoting women, such as *wijf* / *Weib* ‘woman, wench’; *loeder* / *Luder* ‘hussy, slut’; *mens* / *Mensch* ‘(poor female) person’, then a deviation from the semantic norm is being made explicit through the often derogatory intended use of the neuter gender (all named examples here are grammatically neuter). The norm-divergence-principle also applies to some derogatory names for men in German, e.g., the grammatically feminine nouns *Schwuchtel*, *Tunte* ‘faggot’ and *Memme* ‘sissy’ (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 85). Dutch derogatory names for homosexual men also tend to emphasise a supposed femininity: the common-gender nouns *nicht* (the same word

⁹For a discussion on the interplay of grammatical gender and sex marking, cf. Section 3.1.

¹⁰Some Germanic varieties, among those are northern Dutch varieties, have lost the masculine/feminine gender distinction and the formerly differentially marked categories have historically merged into one common-gender category, the *utrum*.

as *nicht* ‘female cousin, niece’) as well as Flemish *janet* (from the French proper name *Jeanette*) have a direct female etymology (Philippa et al. 2003). Hence, the principle applies when the referent’s perceived behaviour is for some reason deviant from a socially dictated gender norm, or when a person is emphasised as not yet being sexually mature, as is the case in *meisje/Mädchen* ‘girl’ and German *Fräulein* ‘young lady, damsel’.¹¹ These norm-divergent nouns fall under Corbett’s category of hybrid nouns. Corbett defines hybrid nouns based on their syntactic behaviour. These are nouns “which neither take the agreements of one consistent agreement pattern nor belong to two or more genders” (Corbett 1991: 183). In other words, they give rise to sentences such as (2), where the feminine personal noun does not coincide with the neuter gender of *Mädchen* ‘girl’. Thus, there is a conflict between the lexical gender and the referential gender of a noun (Dahl 2000: 106). In the case of *Mädchen*, the lexical gender is determined on a formal basis: diminutives are always neuter nouns in German. The referent of *Mädchen*, however, is always female. In (2), referential gender takes precedence over the noun’s lexical gender in an agreement situation between the noun and an anaphoric pronoun, which is thus called semantic agreement (for a discussion on agreement, cf. Section 2.3).

- (2) Hast du noch etwas von **dem Mädchen** gehört? Ich habe **sie**
 Have you again anything from the.NEUR girl.NEUT heard I have her.PRO.FEM
 schon lange nicht mehr gesprochen.
 already long not anymore talked.to
 ‘Have you heard anything from that girl again? I haven’t talked to her in a long time.’

Semantic agreement is not just a feature of Modern German and Dutch. The Middle High German noun *wīp* [*Weib*] ‘woman’ is well attested as a trigger for semantic gender agreement on its targets (cf. Fleischer 2012). In a larger corpus investigation on New High German

¹¹The same is true for animals, mainly those which have historically or culturally been relevant to humans. While the grammatical gender of some culturally and economically relevant adult animals coincides with their sex in German, young animals receive a neuter gender. German examples are *die Stute* ‘the mare’ vs. *der Hengst* ‘the stallion’ vs. *das Fohlen* ‘the foal’ and *das Pony* ‘the pony’; *die Henne* ‘the hen’ vs. *der Hahn* ‘the cock’ vs. *das Küken* ‘the chick’; *die Kuh* ‘the cow’ vs. *der Stier* ‘the bull’ vs. *das Kalb* ‘the calf’. In Dutch, the corresponding names for adult animals logically belong to the common-gender category (e.g., *de merrie* ‘the mare’, *de stier* ‘the bull’, whereas young animals are neuter (e.g., *het kalf* ‘the calf’).

prose texts from the 17th to the 19th century, Breder Birkenes, Chroni & Fleischer (2014) demonstrate that the nouns *Weib*, *Mädchen*, and *Fräulein* are typical triggers for semantic gender agreement. While semantic agreement even occurred in attributive domains in older texts (3), it was – perhaps under the influence of normative writing – avoided in younger texts (Breder Birkenes, Chroni & Fleischer 2014: 22).

- (3) **Liebe Fräulein!** auf ihrem Platze möchte ich wohl nicht sitzen, denn ich
 dear.FEM lady.NEUT on your place would.like I MOD not sit because I
 traue den Maulwürfften nicht gar allzu viel zu.
 trust the moles not MOD too much PART
 ‘Dear lady! I would not want to sit in your place, because I don’t trust all these
 moles.’

(cit. Breder Birkenes, Chroni & Fleischer 2014: 9)

In a recent study of contemporary German, Binanzer, Schimke & Schunack (2022) experimentally investigated targets of the German hybrid nouns *Mädchen*, *Fräulein*, and *Weib*. They had children between eight and ten years old choose between differently inflected NP attributes, as well as relative-pronoun and personal-pronoun anaphoric continuations for each of these hybrid nouns. The examples in (4) and (5) show the options from which the participants were able to choose in agreement with the noun *Fräulein* in square brackets. The authors found that *Weib* triggered a higher number of neuter continuations than *Mädchen* and *Fräulein*, which they attribute to a difference in social status of these nouns’ referents.

- (4) Im Restaurant arbeitet [eine/ein] [nette/netter/nettes]
 in.the restaurant works [a.FEM/NEUT/MASC] [nice.FEM/MASC/NEUT]
 Fräulein, [die/das/der] sehr höflich ist.
 waitress.NEUT [who.FEM/NEUT/MASC] very polite is
 ‘In the restaurant works a nice waitress, who is very polite.’
- (5) In der Küche ist [das/der/die] [netter/nettes/nette] Fräulein.
 in the kitchen is [the.NEUT/MASC/FEM] [nice.MASC/NEUT/FEM] waitress.NEUT
 [Sie/Er/Es] holt den Nachtisch.
 [she/he/it] brings the dessert
 ‘In the kitchen is the nice waitress. She is getting us dessert.’

In the same study, it was found that certain other nouns whose grammatical gender is deviant from their referent's sex are generally more likely to trigger formal agreement than *Mädchen*, *Fräulein*, and *Weib*. These are epicene nouns and will be discussed in the next section.

Semantic gender agreement in the case of animate hybrid nouns is well attested in Dutch as well. Examples include nouns such as the diminutives *nichtje* 'little cousin.F' and *broertje* 'little brother' (Audring 2006: 92). The Dutch cognate to *Mädchen*, *meisje*, regularly triggers semantic gender agreement. This phenomenon has been attested since the 17th century (Geerts 1966: 3.1-3.2), in fact, semantic agreement of anaphoric possessive pronouns in reference to *meisje* are even obligatory:

- (6) * Het **meisje** reed op **zijn** fiets.
 the.NEUT girl.NEUT rode on his.NEUT bike
 'The girl rode his bike.'

(cit. Audring 2009: 194)

Here, the Dutch system is similar to the English one, where semantic discrepancies between the possessive pronoun and the antecedent *girl* – which in English is no longer neuter – are ungrammatical. Audring (2009) therefore proposes that the Dutch pronominal system is being reorganised with semantics as its new foundation. Diachronic systemic developments in this context will be discussed in Section 3.1.

Hybrid nouns are then nouns which trigger agreement on their targets that differs from their own grammatical gender. Instead, the agreement is semantically motivated: in animate nouns, semantic agreement is in line with the referent's sex (e.g., *meisje/Mädchen ... ze/sie* 'girl.N ... she'). Gender assignment to these animate nouns is itself deviant from the expected grammatical gender, because the perceived sex of the referent diverges from a socially determined gender norm.

2.1.2 Epicene nouns

Like hybrid nouns, epicene nouns are an exception to the sex-based rule of the German gender system. They differ from hybrid nouns in that the referent's sex is not part of the lexical semantics of the noun. Instead, its referent can be of either sex, without changes in the form of the noun. It is common for epicene nouns to etymologically denote inanimate or abstract entities, as is the case in, e.g., the German *die Koryphäe* and Dutch *de coryfee* 'the expert';¹² German *die Persönlichkeit* and Dutch *de persoonlijkheid* 'the personality'; German *der Star* and Dutch *de ster* 'the star, famous person'. Some nouns are deliberately formed to be epicene through lexemes whose etymology is inanimate, e.g., *die Lehrkraft/de leerkracht* 'the teacher'. Here the suffixoid carries the grammatical gender of its own lexical source. These nouns are thus often formed because of their generic potential: German *Lehrkraft* is the gender-neutral alternative to the binary pair *Lehrer-Lehrerin*; Dutch *leerkracht* is the alternative to the pair *leraar-lerares*.¹³

Since the sex of their possible referents is not lexically determined, it is unsurprising that formal agreement on an anaphoric pronoun with an epicene antecedent is more common than with hybrid-noun antecedents (Binanzer, Schimke & Schunack 2022: 206). Moreover, it has been shown that the referent's age is a relevant independent variable with regards to semantic gender agreement. Binanzer et al. (2022: 215) note that agreement based on the referent's sex is generally more common with the noun *das Kind* 'the child' than the noun *das Baby* 'the baby'. In a study on Middle High German *kint* 'child', Breder Birkenes & Fleischer (2022) found that the frequency of semantic agreement on its targets gradually increased from the adnominal attributive position (1.7%) over relative pronouns (42.9%) toward anaphoric pronouns outside of the nominal group (74.7%):

¹²The noun goes back to French *coryphée* 'important personality, head of an institution' (<https://www.dwds.de/wb/Koryphäe> [Accessed 10-11-2023]).

¹³The form *-kracht/-kraft* was not originally used in contexts in which the intention is to avoid gendered forms. They originate as plurals in reference to a group of people, the first attestation being *Streitkräfte* 'armed forces' at the end of the 18th century (<https://www.dwds.de/wb/Kraft> [Accessed 10-11-2023]). Only later are they used for single reference. Their use for human beings is metonymic: the (joined) forces of people stand for the people themselves (cf. Verelst 2023).

(7) Attribute & Relative pronoun

der kint sagete mir selbe dí rede. **den** si liezen
the.MASC child.NEUT said to.me himself the talk whom.MASC they left
háime
at.home

‘The child, whom they left at home, said this to me himself.’

(Breder Birkenes & Fleischer 2022: 250)

(8) Anaphoric personal pronoun

Herre daz ich daz chint sehen mûzze **Er** ist wârlich der svn
Lord that I the.NEUT child.NEUT see must He is truly the.MASC son
meín
of.me

‘Lord, I must see the child. He truly is my son.’

(Breder Birkenes & Fleischer 2022: 253)

This is in line with the Syntactic Domain Principle, which stipulates that when syntactic distance increases, the likelihood of semantic agreement increases as well (Köpcke, Panther & Zubin 2010: 185-186). As opposed to the Middle High German hybrid noun *wīp* [*Weib*], the noun *kint* [*Kind*] triggers semantic agreement far less frequently. The former serves as a source for semantic gender agreement in nearly every relative-pronoun and anaphoric personal-pronoun context, whereas the latter does not (Breder Birkenes & Fleischer 2022: 257). More recent examples of *Kind* triggering semantic gender agreement, even in the attributive domain, are found in Wenker sentences in the Northern Low German area, e.g. *min lever Kind* ‘my dear.¬F child.N’ (ibid.: 261).

As for the distinction of epicene nouns from binarily constructed PN pairs, Klein (2022) regards the notion of referentiality¹⁴ as the most relevant. Based on two different case studies, one on epicene nouns in specific reference, and one on epicene nouns in non-specific reference and non-referential contexts, he finds that the genericity of epicene nouns is likely due to

¹⁴For a discussion, cf. Section 2.3.2.

their prevalent occurrence in non-referential contexts: “[sie] beziehen ihre semantische Flexibilität vermutlich nur daher, dass sie spezifische Referenzen im natürlichen Sprachgebrauch vermeiden”¹⁵ (Klein 2022: 180). In his first case study, which aimed at assessing gendered interpretations of epicene nouns in contexts with specific reference, Klein had participants (n = 804) complete sentences containing the epicene nouns *Mensch* ‘person, human.MASC’ or *Person* ‘person.FEM’ with proper names in a questionnaire.¹⁶ When these nouns appeared in specific reference, it was found that proper-name continuations from participants largely coincided with the grammatical gender of the noun, namely masculine for *Mensch* (9a-9b) – between 82% and 95% – and feminine for *Person* (10a-10b) – between 65% and 83%. Lower numbers for *Person* are attributed to extralinguistic androcentrism (Klein 2022: 178-179).

- (9) a. Der junge **Mensch** mit dem Fahrrad heißt ...
 the.MASC young.MASC person.MASC with the bike is.called ...
 ‘The young person with the bike is called ...’
- b. Ich weiß da einen **Menschen**, der seine Termine pünktlich
 I know there a.MASC person.MASC who.MASC his appointments on.time
 wahrnimmt. Er heißt ...
 keeps he is.called ...
 ‘I know of a person who keeps their appointments on time. They are called ...’
- (10) a. Die junge **Person** am Fenster heißt ...
 the.FEM young.FEM person.FEM at.the window is.called ...
 ‘The young person standing at the window is called ...’
- b. Wir kennen da eine **Person**, die immer zuverlässig ihre
 we know there a.FEM person.FEM who.FEM always reliably her
 Aufgaben erledigt. Sie heißt ...
 tasks fulfills she is.called ...
 ‘We know of a person who always reliably fulfills their tasks. They are called ...’

(Examples from Klein 2022: 177)

In light of these considerations, Klein (2022: 180) calls these nouns pseudo-epicenes. Their behaviour in non-referential or non-specific domains is nearly always generic. Relative pro-

¹⁵“Their semantic flexibility is presumably due to the fact that they avoid specific reference in natural language use.” [N.V.]

¹⁶The study was repeated (with n = 100) one year later.

nouns directly adjacent to the noun *Person* are masculine in about 0.5% of occurrences, where it can be assumed that the reference is to a specific person (Klein 2022: 181), while there are no grammatically feminine relative pronouns to the noun *Mensch* to be found:

- (11) “Star Wars”? Ich kenne nur eine einzige **Person, der** eine
 Star Wars I know only one.FEM single.FEM person.FEM who.MASC a
 Feindschaft zwischen SW und ST sieht.
 rivalry between SW and ST sees
 ‘Star Wars? I know of only one person who sees a rivalry between SW [Star Wars]
 and ST [Star Trek].’

(cit. Klein 2022: 181)

Similar results were obtained for nouns that were formed as epicene nouns as a means of *undoing gender* in a corpus-based study. It has been found that nouns such as *leerkracht/Lehrkraft* differ from binarily constructed noun pairs (*leraar/Lehrer* ‘teacher.¬F’ vs. *lerares/Lehrerin* ‘teacher.F’) in that they are used in non-specific contexts by default (Verelst 2023).

Using anglicisms, Kopf (2022) demonstrates that Modern German tends to split originally epicene nouns into binarily formed personal-noun pairs. The more a noun becomes integrated into the German PN system, the more often it also receives feminising morphology in female contexts. She observes that many of the nouns that have been listed as epicene (anglicisms as well as native nouns) in different works on German grammar throughout the 20th century are now regularly found in binary PN pairs. Examples are *Kapitän-Kapitänin* ‘captain’; *Steinmetz-Steinmetzin* ‘stonemason’; *Interviewer-Interviewerin* ‘interviewer’; *Pionier-Pionierin* ‘pioneer’ etc. (Kopf 2022: 68). Much like Klein’s observation on epicene nouns, referentiality is the steering factor: in the domain of English derivatives in *-er* (e.g., *Manager, Teenager*), constraints on feminisation are steadily being set aside, starting in referential contexts (ibid.: 95-96).

Generally, German exhibits a tendency to split epicenes into binary pairs when they have a specific referent (i.e., not a generic referent, or a collective of referents). This does not only explain why loan words are quite rapidly adapted to the German feminisation system, but also why we increasingly encounter feminised forms such as *Vormündin* ‘guardian.F’ and

Vorständin ‘board.F, executive.F’, which stem from formerly epicene native German nouns. Occurrences in the above tables 2.1 and 2.2 demonstrate that German contrasts with Dutch in this tendency. Hypercorrect use of the German feminising suffix *-in* as an indexical marker of gender-fair language use (cf. Szczepaniak 2023) may contribute to the occurrence of forms such as *Vorständin*, but also to the feminisation of neuter epicenes of the type *Mitglied* → *Mitgliedin* ‘member’. Occasionalisms of the type *Starin* ‘star.F’, *Geiselin* ‘hostage.F’, *Menschin* ‘human, person.F’ can be explained by this indexical use of *-in*. However, nouns of the type *Vorständin* have surpassed the stage of occasional use.

While *Geiselin* ‘hostage.F’ is listed in the Grimm dictionary as *weiblicher Geisel* ‘female hostage.→F’ (Grimm & Grimm 1881), and attested since at least Middle High German, it occurs only three times in the deTenTen20 corpus. Many feminised forms on the epicene end of the table are evidently perceived as unusual; they are often subject to metalinguistic speculation (12), or appear in quotation marks (13), signaling their peculiarity.

- (12) Und dessen Mitglied Regina Elsner (**Mitgliedin?** Ohneglied? Ist das Wort and whose member.NEUT Regina Elsner member.F ‘Ohneglied’ is the word “Mitglied” noch nicht gegendert??) im Interview mit queer.de erklärt, warum member.NEUT not yet gendered in interview with queer.de explains why Wodka-Boykotte, Blockaden und das Aufkündigen von Beziehungen wenig wodka-boycotts blockades and the denouncing of relations little produktiv sind [...]. productive are ...
- ‘And whose member Regina Elsner (Member.F?’ “Ohneglied”?’ Is the word “member” not yet being gendered?) explains in an interview with queer.de why wodka boycotts, blockades and denouncing relations are not very productive.’

(deTenTen20 [12948663303], muttersbestes.blogspot.com)

- (13) Die unablässig sich von Zwängen befreiende “**Menschin**” spricht zu uns aus
 the ceaselessly herself of constraints freeing person.F speaks to us from
 solchen abstrakten Zeilen. Ist’s der gute Rat einer Freundin am Kaffeetisch
 such abstract lines is.it the good advice of.a friend.F at.the coffee.table
 oder nicht doch der unterschwellig anmaßende Tonfall einer strengen
 or not rather the subliminal presumptuous tone of.a strict
 Gesetzgeberin [...]?
 legislator
 ‘The person.F, who ceaselessly frees herself von constraints, speaks to us from such
 abstract lines. Is it the good advice of a friend at the coffee table, or perhaps rather
 the subliminal presumptuous tone of a strict legislator?’

(deTenTen20 [4282568103], revierpassagen.de)

Boundaries between epicene and binary nouns on the frequency level are fuzzy, as stated before: between the two ends of the scale there are nouns whose non-feminised forms considerably outnumber their feminised counterparts (*Vorstand*, which is 529 times more frequent than *Vorständin*, and *Gast*, which is 11.856 times more frequent than *Gästin*, for instance). However, the absolute frequencies of the feminised forms give away that their non-feminised equivalents may have surpassed the stage of epicenity. Moreover, a feminised noun may have a low frequency not because it is not established in that form, but because it lacks referents. For example, the Dutch noun *verpleegster* ‘nurse.F’ is very frequent compared to its non-feminised equivalent, whereas *politica* ‘politician.F’ is less common, although both are well-established forms. Many of the nouns listed below the 10:1 ratio, including *Kapitänin*, are relatively new to the class of binarily constructed PN pairs, often because their female referents are also new to the occupational domain. For Oksaar (1976), *Kapitänin* was not feminisable,¹⁷ and its scarce occurrence in historical German texts¹⁸ confirms this intuition. *Managerin*, for instance, is first attested in 1955 in the DWDS corpora, in the newspaper *Die Zeit* (cf. also Kopf 2022: 91); *Laiin* is first found in a 1930 source; *Steinmetzin* is attested

¹⁷Anecdotally, a German speaker used the phrase *Frau Kapitän* ‘lit. Ms. captain’, and upon request explained that he sees the noun as a title rather than a PN. As will be further elaborated in Chapters 4 and 7, titles are often seen and used as non-modifiable words.

¹⁸DWDS historical corpora contain the form only twice in the 19th century and twice in the 20th century.

as of 1965¹⁹; *Vorständin* is attested since 2013. Hence, these nouns are relatively new to the German repertoire of feminised nouns, as opposed to, e.g., *Dozentin* (1845), *Ministerin* (1701), *Lehrerin* (1580), *Kundin* (1558) etc. English loans in *-er* follow the sex-based rule rather quickly. The masculine agentive suffix *-er* is highly productive as a native German suffix as well – English nouns easily follow this pattern analogically (cf. Kopf 2022).

The main question put forward by these observations concerns the crosslinguistically valid distinction of epicene nouns from nouns which are – in theory – feminisable. We will assume that every PN is theoretically feminisable, regardless of whether it actually exists in language use as a feminised noun (e.g., *docente/Dozentin* ‘lecturer.F’) or not (e.g., Dutch *professor* ‘professor.¬F’). Furthermore, we will assume that epicene nouns are nouns with a human referent, which *can* participate in the process of feminisation for some reasons (e.g., the indexical marker *-in* in *Menschin* ‘human.F’), but by default do not, because they display certain characteristics that hinders feminisation (cf. below). Since epicenity cannot be measured from the token frequencies of feminised nouns, epicene nouns have to be described on the basis of other criteria. This can be qualified using two parameters, one functional and one formal, which will be maintained throughout the following sections and chapter. A noun will henceforth be considered epicene if at least one of the two following criteria applies:

I. Human reference as a secondary function

If the noun is etymologically inanimate or non-human and was then extended onto human reference (through metaphoric or metonymic mapping onto humans), then the noun can be considered epicene. This principle counts for loan words as well. For examples, cf. Table 2.3.

II. Formal characteristics of the noun

If a word is formed by a word-formation process which takes precedence over or blocks feminisation, then it can be considered epicene. For examples, cf. Table 2.4.

¹⁹It is attested in a 1741 source as a patronym: ‘daughter of the stonemason’.

Since the nouns *Mensch* and *Person* are not covered by these criteria, they are mentioned here separately; their main function is to denote generic human beings, or the species of humans. The criteria introduced above imply that some feminised nouns which are attested words (e.g., German *Mensch* ‘person, human’ as *Menschin*, *Dummkopf* ‘dummy’ as *Dummköpfin*) still have to be considered epicene. Conversely, some nouns that never occur as feminised forms (e.g., Dutch *ingenieur*, *professor*) are still not considered epicene. The idea is that feminisation of the latter is not restricted by some formal rule, but rather that other factors are at play (cf. Section 3.2.2 and Chapter 7), which block feminisation in these nouns. These factors can include restricted productivity of various feminisation patterns (cf. Chapter 5), as well as further intra- and extralinguistic factors (gender system, semantics of the PN, language policy) that are discussed in Chapter 7.

Both groups of epicene nouns are a quite large open class. A non-exhaustive exemplary list for group I is given in Table 2.3. Listed are nouns which primarily denote animals and inanimate referents. Nouns such as *Vormund* ‘guardian, custodian’ and *Vorstand* ‘board member’ are not included in the table, because they are primarily – not secondarily – used in reference to human beings. They are lexicalised as [+human] nouns, and their original nonhuman semantics have been replaced by human semantics. Criterion I should thus be further nuanced: it concerns primarily nonhuman nouns which are also still transparently used in nonhuman reference (e.g., *anker* ‘anchor’ and *gewicht*/*Gewicht* ‘weight’ are still transparently used in their original senses). The primary referents of nouns can be assessed either through dictionaries, or by their usage frequencies (for human and nonhuman reference) in corpora. The same rules that apply for native Dutch and German nouns apply to loan words such as German *Star* ‘star’, which behaves formally like native German *Stern* ‘star’.

It is common to use animal nouns to describe people, mostly in combination with another characteristic as exocentric compounds. Such nouns do not come in binary pairs and the animal referent differs crosslinguistically. A more uniform vocabulary is found in the realm of inanimate entities that are used to refer to people. Characteristics of these entities and concepts are often metaphorically extended onto human beings, as is the case in many

	DUTCH	GERMAN	TRANSLATION
ANIMALS	<i>bezige bij</i>	<i>fleißiges Bienchen</i>	‘busy bee’
	<i>haantje-de-voorste</i>	<i>Kampfhahn</i>	‘fighter’ (lit. ‘fighting rooster’)
	<i>sloddervos</i>		‘Johnny on the spot’ (lit. ‘front rooster’) ‘pack rat’ (lit. ‘clutter fox’)
INANIMATES	<i>fenomeen</i>	<i>Phänomen</i>	‘phenomenon’
	<i>figuur</i>	<i>Figur</i>	‘character, type’
	<i>icoon</i>	<i>Ikone</i>	‘icon’
	<i>legende</i>	<i>Legende</i>	‘legend’
	<i>lichtgewicht</i>	<i>Leichtgewicht</i>	‘lightweight’
	<i>model</i>	<i>Model</i>	‘model’
	<i>nieuwsanker</i>		‘news anchor’
	<i>nul</i>		‘zero’
	<i>schoonheid</i>	<i>Schönheit</i>	‘beauty’
	<i>slachtoffer</i>	<i>Opfer</i>	‘victim’ (lit. ‘sacrifice’)
	<i>smeerlap</i>		‘scumbag’ (lit. ‘grease rag’)
		<i>Drecksack</i>	‘scumbag’
	<i>ster</i>	<i>Star</i>	‘star’
	<i>type</i>	<i>Typ</i>	‘type’
	<i>withangbord</i>	<i>Aushängeschild</i>	‘sign board’
<i>vechtjas</i>		‘fighter’ (lit. ‘fighting jacket’)	
<i>wrak</i>	<i>Wrack</i>	‘wreck’	
<i>zonnetje</i>	<i>Sonnenschein</i>	‘little ray of sunshine’	

Table 2.3: Epicene nouns – animal and inanimate nouns as [+human] epicene nouns.

derogatory names. Nouns such as *sunshine* and *star* are typical examples of metaphoric use as well. Since these nouns do not primarily denote people, they are logically not adapted to a referent's sex and are therefore very suitable as epicene nouns. This functional category stands next to the formal category of epicene nouns, with examples listed in Table 2.4.

DUTCH	GERMAN	TRANSLATION
<i>food-ie</i>	<i>Food-ie</i>	'foodie'
<i>junk-ie</i>	<i>Junk-ie</i>	'junkie'
<i>arbeids-kracht</i>	<i>Arbeits-kraft</i>	'worker, employee'
<i>leer-kracht</i>	<i>Lehr-kraft</i>	'teacher'
<i>verpleeg-kundige</i>	<i>Pflege-kraft</i>	'nurse, caregiver'
<i>prof</i>	<i>Prof</i>	'professor'
<i>flapuit</i>		'blabbermouth' (lit. 'blurt-out')
<i>flirt</i>	<i>Flirt</i>	'flirt'
<i>spring-in-'t-veld</i>		'frolicker' (lit. 'jump-in-the-flied')

Table 2.4: Epicene nouns characterised by formal properties.

Note that nouns in *-kracht/-kraft* are listed here in Table 2.4, but they stem from compounds with a nonhuman noun, which would place them in Table 2.3 above. They are listed here because they are increasingly used as non-gendered alternatives to binarily constructed PN pairs, and because they have shifted toward a suffix-like status, in that they form sequences of nouns, rather than single compounds. The Dutch suffix *-kundige* has the same characteristics, except that it does not stem from a noun: *-kundig* is an adjective. In Dutch, such formations are also used to avoid gendered forms due to syncretism of the masculine and feminine inflectional adjective endings. Hence, the forms *-kracht/-kraft* and *-kundige* block feminisation, whereas human derivational suffixes such as *-er* (< Lat. *-ārius*), *-ist*, *-or*, *-eur* invite it. These are all suffixes with the specific semantics '(male) person who does/is X'. Nouns formed through clipping are mostly not feminised, precisely because the element that gives way to feminisation (e.g., *-or* in *Professor*) is cut off as well. The more lexicalised the item becomes, the more likely it is that feminisation occurs (e.g., *Auszubildende/r* 'trainee' > *Azubi* → *Azubine*). Forms such as *flapuit* and *spring-in't-verld* are the result of univerbation. Since they are nominalised syntactic phrases, they are unsuitable candidates for

feminisation.

One last category of PNs that falls outside of the investigative scope here are nominalised participles of the form *inzittende* ‘passenger.UTR’, *Studierende/r* ‘Student.FEM/MASC’, *Vorsitzende/r* ‘chairperson.FEM/MASC’. Widely regarded as participles that have an adjectival status (Bech 1955: 13; Fuhrhop & Teuber 2000), which are then further nominalised, these forms are governed by inflection rules. They are sex-marked insofar as the masculine and feminine genders coincide with male and female sex in German (cf. Section 3.1.2), comparable to the gender-sex-overlap in the pronouns *er* ‘he’ and *sie* ‘she’. In the example in (14), both forms are used with the apparent intention of using gender-fair language through splitting (making use of the masculine and the feminine form). Note that *Partner* is still used generically in the example.

- (14) Die Altersgrenze verfällt hingegen, wenn **ein Studierender** oder **eine Studierende** über den Ehepartner bzw. einen verbrieften Lebenspartner gesetzlich versichert ist.
legally insured is
‘However, the age limit expires when a (male) student or a (female) student is insured through a spouse or a documented life partner.’

(deTenTen20 [4424128288], jobmensa.de)

In Dutch, these participles are no longer spread over two different gender classes. They have merged into the *utrum* class, as opposed to masculine and feminine pronouns. They are therefore gender-neutral, both in the singular (15a), where the sex of the referent is not deducible from the form of the participle, and in the plural (15b).

- (15) a. Zowel de auto als de vrachtwagen liepen flinke schade op door het
Both the car and the truck ran much damage on because of the
ongeval, ambulancepersoneel heeft zich ontfermd over de **inzittende**
accident ambulance.staff have themselves taken care over the passenger
van de auto.
of the car

‘Both the car and the truck were strongly damaged in the accident, ambulance staff took care of the passenger in the car.’

(nlTenTen20 [95134849], district8.net)

- b. Het bootje waarin Stönner en de korporaal J. Bodes zaten, was lek
the little.boat in.which Stönner and the corporal J. Bodes sat was leak
geschoten en de beide **inzittenden** waren te water geraakt.
shot and the both passengers were to water got
‘The little boat, in which Stönner and corporal J. Bodes sat, was shot to a leakage,
and both passengers had ended up in the water.’

(nlTenTen20 [948600], prinsesirenebrigade.nl)

Due to the blocking of gender morphology in the plural, they are often seen and used as gender-fair alternatives to the generic use of masculine forms in German mixed-gender semantic contexts (e.g., *Studierende*.PART as an alternative to *Studenten*.-F), even in compounds:

- (16) Kurzerhand hatten die **Studierenden**vertretungen und Gewerkschaften
without.further.ado had the students.representatives and unions
am Wochenende zu einer Demonstration vor dem Hessischen Landtag
in.the weekend to a demonstration in.front.of the Hessian Landtag
aufgerufen, um auf die unzureichende Soforthilfemaßnahmen für **Studierende**
called to to the insufficient immediate.aid for students
Aufmerksam zu machen.
attention to make

‘Without further ado, the students’ representatives and the unions had called for people to join a demonstration in front of the Hessian Landtag, to draw attention to the insufficient immediate aid measures for students.’

(deTenTen20 [622306], wiesbaden-lebt.de)

Their use is discussed controversially. The semantics of participles is sometimes analysed as having a progressive aspect: “es geht nicht um die Tätigkeit als solche, sondern um eine aspektuelle Überformung derselben. Die Tätigkeit befindet sich im Verlauf”²⁰ (Eisenberg

²⁰‘It is not about the activity as such, but about an aspectual reshaping of it. The activity is in progress.’
[N.V.]

2021: 12). This criticism relies on the historical progressive semantics of present participles. Nonetheless, following an acceptability study on German present participles, Zimmer (forthc.) reports that these forms²¹ are widely accepted in contexts which do not contain a progressive aspect (cf. also the example in (16) above).

The main takeaway here is that any noun denoting a person has the potential of receiving gender morphology if a language system provides this kind of morphology, and if this morphological pattern is productive enough. Certain constraints nevertheless apply to this principle, which is where we enter the realm of hybrid and epicene nouns. The lexical entry of hybrid nouns contains gendered semantics, whereas epicene nouns are semantically neutral (due to their non-referential use or their inanimate source semantics) and therefore applicable to referents of any sex. As demonstrated above, there is no clear-cut division between binary personal-noun pairs and epicene nouns. Many nouns do not have formal restrictions to being gendered (German *-in* has become so productive that it even – occasionally – occurs in nouns such as *Typin* ‘type, character.F’ or *Dummköpfen* ‘dummy.F’). On the other hand, some Dutch PNs that have a clear potential for being gender-marked only appear as generic nouns (*professor*, *minister*). The line between binary noun pairs and epicene nouns will therefore not be drawn purely based on how they are found in (written) corpora. Rather, for one workable rule to apply to both Dutch and German, which will be needed in the corpus study in Chapter 6, boundaries between the two categories are drawn based on two parameters (of which only one must apply): the main/original function of nouns that are used in a [+human] context as a PN, and formal characteristics of a personal noun turning it into a noun with generic meaning. In the following section, diachronic developments in Dutch and German gender systems will serve as a first factor in explaining the current differences outlined above.

²¹Four frequent forms were tested: *Studierende* ‘students’, *Teilnehmende* ‘participants’, *Mitarbeitende* ‘coworkers’, and *Forschende* ‘researchers’ (Zimmer forthc.).

2.2 Feminisation in a usage-based framework

Feminisation has been defined as the morphological process that expresses – or *marks* – the extralinguistic feature sex (Doleschal 1992: 9). It is no coincidence that the vast majority of gender markers are markers of female sex to a masculine base. As a well-studied fact, the male-as-norm (MAN) principle is valid in Germanic languages and well beyond. The idea is that the historical reality of patriarchal societal structures have taken root in language as one aspect of cognition, so that a basic cognitive representation of the male as the default human being is reflected on many linguistic levels: “finden sich keine expliziten Hinweise auf weibliches Geschlecht, greift der *male bias*”²² (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 115). It has reflexes on the pronominal level, for instance, with the use of the masculine pronoun *he* in generic contexts (cf. early works on generically used pronouns in Martyna 1978; Moulton et al. 1978; Silveira 1980; Moulton 1981, and more recent experimental research in Redl 2020). It is reflected in the nouns that describe human beings in Indoeuropean languages, e.g., French *homme* meaning both ‘man’ and ‘human, person’, or English *man* ‘people, humans’ and *mankind*. Personal nouns that are not gender-marked – i.e., in most cases, not feminised – are regularly used in a context that is not male-specific:

- (17) **Der Existenzialist** glaubt, dass die Realität vom Einzelnen gesehen
The.MASC existentialist.MASC believes that the reality by.the individual seen
und entdeckt wird und nicht getrennt vom Individuum existiert.
and discovered is and not separated from.the individual exists
‘The existentialist believes that reality is seen and discovered by the individual, and
that it cannot exist separate from the individual.’

(deTenTen20 [1465504045], anne.xobor.de)

In the above example, the German PN *Existenzialist* ‘existentialist.→F’ is used to denote the collective of existentialists in a generic sense, and this can naturally include women, rather than one specific (male) existentialist. Feminisation is a process used to mark female sex on a PN, and, by logical implication, non-feminised nouns could be assumed to mark male sex

²²‘If there are no explicit female-sex cues, the male bias takes effect.’ [N.V]

– “whoever is not a woman must be a man” writes van Santen (2003: 15). However, due to their occurrence in contexts such as the one in (17), non-feminised PNs are often analysed in a structuralist framework of markedness (Jakobson 1957). Here, the relation between two linguistic items is seen as asymmetric, whereby one has an additional meaning, “a certain (whether positive or negative) property A” (Jakobson 1957: 136) that the other has not. This relation between a marked and an unmarked element is also called a privative opposition (van Santen 2003: 10) and it is semantic in nature. Semantic markedness is accompanied by morphological markedness when a linguistic form “is symbolised formally more costly than its semantically less complex base form” (Wurzel 1998: 68). This principle is called constructional iconicity: more formal features equal more semantic features (ibid.). However, it appears that an analysis of gender marking on PNs within a structuralist framework of markedness is problematic for a number of reasons.

From a semantic perspective, the very idea that there is in fact a relation of semantic markedness between a non-feminised PN and its feminised counterpart has been questioned and empirically tested since the 1970s. Starting in the context of feminist language reform, studies have shown that, at least in gendered languages like German, the masculine is not interpreted generically by default, despite its intended use as such (cf. among others Braun et al. 1998; Stahlberg & Sczesny 2001; Stahlberg et al. 2001; Irmen & Roßberg 2004; Braun et al. 2007; Gygax et al. 2008; Kollmayer et al. 2018; Misersky et al. 2019; Gygax et al. 2021). Taking Dutch into account as well, De Backer & De Cuypere (2012) conducted a crosslinguistic experimental study on the interpretation of Dutch and German PNs, and found that German non-feminised PNs are interpreted less generically than Dutch ones. Nonetheless, results were observed to be driven by various factors. They are not merely an instance of crosslinguistic differences which are presumably connected with systemic differences. The authors also observed effects from lexical unit type (occupational nouns vs. nouns denoting more general action types), the relative frequency of the masculine noun versus its feminised counterpart, and number (singular vs. plural). In general, occupational nouns were more likely to be interpreted non-neutrally than nouns denoting more general actions.

Furthermore, lower relative frequency of the non-feminised PN in relation to its feminised counterpart predicted a less gender-neutral interpretation, and plural forms were more likely to be interpreted generically than singular forms. Van Santen (2003), for instance, does not assume that the relation within every Dutch PN pair is privative. For her, the nouns in the pair *verpleger-verpleegster* ‘nurse.¬F-nurse.F’ are each other’s equals, whereas in the pair *linguïst-linguïste* ‘linguist.¬F-linguist.F’ there is a privative relation (van Santen 2003: 11-12). Here, too, lexical unit type seems to play a role. While there is ample literature²³ on the “mental images” (Lindqvist, Renström & Sendén 2019: 110), i.e., the cognitive representations that masculine and feminine PNs evoke, a usage-based perspective from corpora has been lacking. The corpus study in Chapter 6 takes the factors that De Backer & De Cuyper (2012) found to be significant into account. In the wake of feminist language reform, alternatives to the use of generically intended non-feminised forms have been put forward (for German, cf. among others Pusch 1984 and more recently Diewald & Steinhauer 2020; Hornscheidt & Sammla 2021; for Dutch, cf. van Alphen 1983, 2011), and these stem from the idea that such forms are exponents of centuries-old sexist language use – an exponent, thus, of the MAN principle.

Sex is constructed binarily on the linguistic level, in line with the traditional biological understanding of sex: lexeme pairs such as *man/Mann* ‘man’ and *vrouw/Frau* ‘woman’, or *moeder/Mutter* ‘mother’ and *vader/Vater* ‘father’, as well as the pronoun pairs *hij/er* ‘he’ and *zij/sie* ‘she’ attest this linguistic recurrence to biological identity features. Even such elements, which are undisputedly lexically sex-specific, can be used in a generic sense. Further above, the use of *man* in reference to humankind was mentioned, and such examples are joined by other lexically male forms, e.g., the Dutch noun *vader* ‘father’ in *voorvaderen* ‘ancestors’, or *broer/Bruder* ‘brother’ in *verbroederen/verbrüdern* ‘fraternise’ or *broederlijk/brüderlich* ‘fraternal’. PN pairs can be analysed to follow the same rule, and the generic use of non-feminised forms simply as being based on the same principle, which

²³German is extensively empirically investigated, along with, and often in contrast with, English, Italian, and Spanish. Dutch is relatively underinvestigated in this domain. Redl (2020) investigated generic use of masculine pronouns in Dutch.

has caused its interpretation as a sexist linguistic feature in the view of feminism. While such analyses have sparked much debate and interest in the interpretation of masculine PNs in German, for feminisation in Dutch it is often assumed that the opposition between a non-feminised and a feminised PN is privative in nature (cf. van Santen & de Vries 1981; van Marle 1984; van Santen 1996, 2003): “[t]he unmarked category simply does not contain a gender-based component” (van Santen 2003: 15). Feminist language reform in the Netherlands, which is discussed in Chapter 4, is based on this premise. On the semantic level, markedness of feminised PNs is a highly controversial topic, and, at least for German, studies in the cognitive sciences rather point to a symmetrical semantic relationship between feminised and non-feminised PNs than an asymmetrical one.

From a morphological perspective, not every feminisation process is an instance of morpheme addition to an unmarked base. The most frequent pattern in German, the suffix *-in*, is added to the base, and resulting forms can thus be considered marked on the morphological level (*Leser* ‘reader.¬F’ → *Leserin* ‘reader.F’). However, the most frequent process in Dutch is feminisation through the suffix *-ster*, which differs from other derivational patterns in that it mostly substitutes the suffix *-er*, instead of being added to it (*speler* ‘player.¬F’ → *speelster* ‘player.F’).²⁴ German *-in* also substitutes the ending *-e* in the bases of weakly inflected masculine nouns (*Kunde* ‘client.¬F’ → *Kundin* ‘client.F’), in which *-e* is a characteristic of [human, male] semantics (Köpcke 2000: 108, 111).²⁵ Moreover, while derivation – in the form of suffix addition or suffix substitution – may be the most common feminisation pattern, there are other morphological means in use to mark female sex on a PN as well: compounding is another such example, as well as lexical and syntactic means (in line with the relevance/fusion cline, cf. 2.3.1). Most compounds with *vrouw/Frau* are comparably young, and they are often formed in analogy to their counterparts with *man/Mann* (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 131-132). In compounding, the lexemes *man/Mann* ‘man’ and *vrouw/Frau* ‘woman’ serve as the compositional heads in two parallel formations: *poetsman-*

²⁴The suffix *-er* originated in Germanic as an agentive suffix in nouns with male referents, and *-ster* existed in analogy to it (Kastovsky 1971: 291).

²⁵An in-depth analysis of feminisation patterns is offered in Chapter 5.

poetsvrouw/Putzmann-Putzfrau ‘cleaning man-cleaning lady’. Still, there are occurrences in which even compounds with *man/Mann* are also used generically:

- (18) Ze is **frontman** bij haar band White Lighten, die liedjes uit de jaren tachtig
 She is front.man at her band White Lighten who songs from the years eighty
 ten gehore brengt.
 to hear brings
 ‘She is the front man of her band White Lighten [sic], which brings songs from the
 eighties.’

(nlTenTen20 [2885945616], bol.com)

- (19) Esther Niffenegger [...] ist **Hauptmann** und Kanzleichefin der
 Esther Niffenegger [...] is captain and chief.executive.officer in.the
 Panzerbrigade 11.
 armoured.brigade 11
 ‘Esther Niffenegger is the captain and chief executive officer of the Armoured Brigade
 11.’

(deTenTen20 [20158776855], annabelle.ch)

Judging from their difficult retrieval in large corpora, such examples are scarce in contemporary Dutch and German. However, according to Barz (1985: 192), some German compounds with *Mann*, such as *Kaufmann* ‘merchant.→F’, were idiomatised and therefore frequently used in reference to women as well. Compounding with *man/Mann* and *vrouw/Frau* is reminiscent of processes of suffix substitution (e.g., *-er* → *-ster*) in that two forms are coined parallel to each other (e.g., [*front-N*]_N → *frontman-frontvrouw*; [*speel-S*]_N → *speler-speelster*) – no morpheme is added to an already existing PN. By way of illustration, all feminisation processes are listed here. The terms ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ refer to morphological markedness in comparison to non-feminised forms, which is the only type of markedness that will henceforth be used in the context of (some) feminised PNs. Only suffixation of feminising suffixes on a non-feminised PN is an instance of morphological markedness. Other feminisation forms are morphologically unmarked in comparison to their non-feminised equivalents.

a. Suffixation

- Marked: [N_{-F} + S_F]
Spieler → *Spieler-in* ‘player’; *gast* → *gast-e* ‘guest’
- Unmarked: [LXM + S_F] parallel to [LXM + S_{-F}]
speel- ‘play.V’ → *speel-ster* ‘player.F’; *vrijwillig* ‘voluntary.ADJ’ → *vrijwillig-ster* ‘volunteer.F’
speel- ‘play.V’ → *spel-er* ‘player.¬F’; *vrijwillig* ‘voluntary.ADJ’ → *vrijwillig-er* ‘volunteer.¬F’

b. Compounding

Unmarked: [LXM + N{‘woman’}] parallel to [LXM + N{‘man’}]

koop-vrouw/Kauf-frau ‘merchant.F’

koop-man/Kauf-mann ‘merchant.¬F’

c. Lexical gender

Unmarked: N_{-F} vs. N_F

moeder/Mutter ‘mother’

vader/Vater ‘father’

These are but some examples of a wider range of feminisation processes, which will be further described in Chapter 5. All feminisation processes will be taken into consideration, regardless of their markedness status. The criterion is that some morphological word-formation process has taken place, which adds female semantics to a (verbal, nominal, adjectival, or adverbial) base.

The above examples do testify to the fact that markedness is a problematic notion to the complex reality of feminisation processes, both on the semantic and on the morphological level. Motschenbacher (2016) argues that the analysis of gendered linguistic structures in a structuralist framework “essentialises” them:

In a structuralist conceptualisation as found in Saussurean and Chomskyan linguistics, language is seen as a stable system of signs that is abstract in the sense

that it is considered to be, in principle, independent of language use [...], a conceptual shift is necessary. In a poststructuralist or discursive approach, language cannot be seen as an abstract, stable system in the minds of the language users. Rather, it is viewed as continually shaped in language use and, therefore, as invariably changing.

(Motschenbacher 2016: 66)

Indeed, structuralist analyses of feminisation have taken on a normative tone from the outset (cf. Kalverkämper 1979a), describing linguistic structures as static and well-defined, as a reaction to the reformative concerns and activities of feminist linguists. Motschenbacher (2010: 94) criticises that “when applied to socially relevant phenomena like gender representation, markedness is a tool for establishing linguistic manifestations of normative ideologies.” Feminist language reform attempts at counteracting societal structures by, among other things, drawing attention to and deconstructing corresponding linguistic structures, and by offering new ones. This, too, is a normative approach, one with variable success rates (cf. Mills 2008: Chapter 3). As an alternative to structuralist or normative approaches, Motschenbacher (2016: 69) argues, we can de-essentialise gendered linguistic structures by considering the phenomena as processes in flux rather than as fixed structures. This implies the above-cited conceptual shift: structures are investigated in a usage-based framework, which does justice to their fluctuating reality. Some aspects that contribute to the use of feminisation and to its interpretation as a semantically marked or unmarked category have been mentioned before. The tables in the previous section, which contained information about the token frequencies of feminised forms in a Dutch and a German corpus, demonstrate that many feminised PNs are more frequent compared to their non-feminised counterparts in German than in Dutch, or that they exist at all. Further studies in the cognitive sciences, cited above, have shown that there are crosslinguistic differences regarding the semantic markedness of feminised PNs: although there is no conclusive evidence that in either language they are semantically marked, non-feminised items seem to be at least interpreted more generically in Dutch than in German. In a poststructuralist sense, reiteration

of communicative behaviours, i.e., of linguistic material in use, leads to “materialisation processes taking place across individual instances of language use” (Motschenbacher 2016: 66). In this context of frequent use, it is unsurprising that in German, female semantics have become attached more to feminised forms in comparison to Dutch, because these are the prototypical forms used in reference to women. In Dutch, by contrast, some nouns only have one form (*ingenieur* ‘engineer.¬F’), and other nouns are often used in reference to women as non-feminised items (*docent* ‘lecturer.¬F’). This crosslinguistic difference is the first of three aspects that de-essentialisation of the study of linguistic aspects of gender/sex entails, according to Motschenbacher:

- (1) de-essentialisation through crosslinguistic comparison, (2) de-essentialisation through historical linguistic analysis, and (3) de-essentialisation through highlighting gender incoherences associated with specific personal reference forms.

(Motschenbacher 2016: 69)

All these factors fall within the scope of this study. While crosslinguistic comparison is the common theme in every chapter and guides different research perspectives in the corpus studies in Chapters 5-7, historical developments in the gender systems of Dutch and German will be outlined in Section 3.1. Gender incoherences were discussed in the previous sections (hybrid nouns and epicene nouns), but they will play an important role in the main corpus study in Chapter 6 as well, where incoherences in the broadest sense are investigated in terms of frequency. This view is embedded in Hopper’s theory of Emergent Grammar, which is adopted here. Especially when dealing with an issue that touches upon sensitivities within large language communities – which feminisation certainly is – an emergent and discourse-based approach is suitable, because it is open to crosslinguistic variation, as well as diachronic and synchronic instability and change:

The notion of Emergent Grammar is meant to suggest that structure, or regularity, comes out of discourse and is shaped by discourse as much as it shapes discourse in an ongoing process. Grammar is hence not to be understood as a

prerequisite for discourse [...]. Its forms are not fixed templates but are negotiable in face-to-face interaction in ways that reflect the individual speakers' past experience of these forms, and their assessment of the present context, including especially their interlocutors, whose experiences and assessments may be quite different. Moreover, the term Emergent Grammar points to a grammar which is not abstractly formulated and abstractly represented, but always anchored in the specific concrete form of an utterance.

(Hopper 1987: 141-142)

A poststructuralist, and thus a de-essentialised, or de-essentialising, view on feminisation encompasses a methodology that attempts at capturing the state of the art on different levels of language use (comparatively, diachronically etc.). Hence, it entails a shift from a top-down (“fixed templates” in the citation above) to a bottom-up approach to describe and explain emerging patterns and their possible or probable expansion onto new contexts (cf. Section 3.2.2). Usage-based approaches have therefore put corpus linguistics into focus (Motschenbacher 2016: 68). Such a methodological shift has been lacking from feminisation research and generally from research in the broader context of gender linguistics. The following sections deal with the semantic and pragmatic aspects that affect these emerging patterns.

2.3 The semantic and pragmatic dimensions of feminisation

2.3.1 Semantics: animacy and individuation

Since the function of feminisation is the marking of the extralinguistic category sex on a PN, it can theoretically only occur within the realm of animate entities: sex is only a semantic feature of humans and animals. However, this is not a consistent process, especially considering crosslinguistic differences. On the one hand, it was demonstrated in the previous sections that not every PN is regularly feminised when it has a female referent (recall the Dutch PNs *ingenieur* and *professor*). On the other hand, there are attestations of primar-

ily inanimate nouns, epicene nouns, being feminised (recall the German nouns *Typin* and *Mitgliedin*). These nouns all have in common that their referent is animate. Leaving the animate domain, there are also occurrences of PNs such as the one in (20):

- (20) Wie **die SPD** als **Befürworterin** der Schuldenbremse so viel
 how the.FEM SPD.FEM as proponent.F of.the debt.ceiling so many
 öffentliche Gelder aufbringen will, bleibt **ihr** Geheimnis.
 public funds raising wants stays her secret
 ‘How the SPD, as a proponent of the debt ceiling, want to raise so many public funds,
 stays her secret.’

(deTenTen20 [6554591640], abgescholzt.de)

In the example, the PN *Befürworterin* is feminised. Its referent, however, is a political party and therefore inanimate. This section therefore deals with feminisation in the broader context of the basis on which a linguistic item receives gender information.

The expression or marking of gender is roughly proportional to the degree of animacy of a referent, represented by the Animacy Hierarchy (Silverstein 1976). The Hierarchy distinguishes humans, who take the highest position on the scale, from nonhuman animate and inanimate entities (cf. Fig. 2.1). Furthermore, it not only includes the semantic notion of animacy, but also the notions of person (first/second > third) and referentiality (pronoun > proper name > common noun), as Croft (2002: 130) points out. Referentiality will be discussed in the next section.

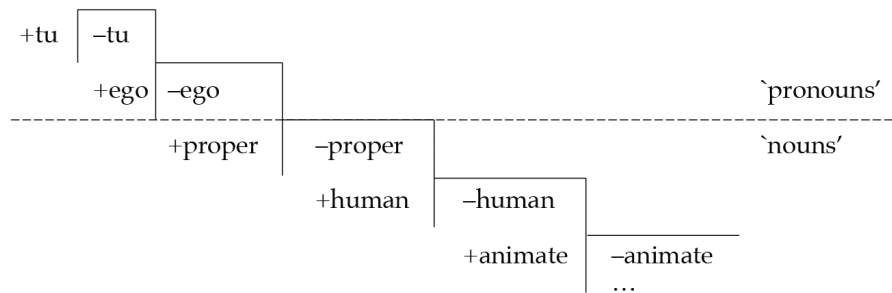


Figure 2.1: The Animacy Hierarchy as presented by Silverstein (1976: 122).

More recently, an elaboration of the Animacy Hierarchy, with further subdivisions within the inanimate part, has proven essential in describing the behaviour of linguistic features (e.g, the

behaviour of pronouns in reference to animate/inanimate entities in Audring 2006, 2009). These elaborations have led to the creation of Individuation Hierarchies. Individuation expresses the ability of a referent to stand as a clearly defined individual, with “a clearly bounded shape and specific characteristics” (Kraaikamp 2017b: 20) and it thus allows for the class of inanimates to be further subcategorised. In the following Individuation Hierarchy by Audring (2006: 102; 2009: 127), specific mass nouns are distinguished from unspecific mass nouns, as well as bounded from unbounded abstracts in the inanimate pole (examples for each category from Kraaikamp 2017a: 52).

- (21) a. HUMAN > OTHER ANIMATE > BOUNDED OBJECT/ABSTRACT > SPECIFIC MASS
> UNSPECIFIC MASS/UNBOUNDED ABSTRACT
- b. *girl* > *horse* > *book/question* > *my tea* > *love/snow*

The Hierarchy does not necessarily assume clear boundaries between animate and inanimate entities. A case in point is feminisation in examples such as (20), where the animate and inanimate classes are somehow intertwined – the exact relation will be investigated empirically in Chapter 7. The Hierarchy is in the first place a representation of a cognitive androcentric and egocentric scale (cf. Dahl 2008).

Animacy and individuation are relevant to gender marking, because sex (which is expressed through gender marking) is a salient feature of animate entities. Kotthoff & Nübling (2018: 93) claim that in imagining an individual person, the person is automatically attributed a sex: “Bekanntlich ist es nicht möglich, sich eine geschlechtslose Einzelperson vorzustellen.”²⁶ Even within the human noun class gender marking may vary and there are different degrees of coalescence involved in gender marking, of which only one will be of further interest: feminisation through word-formation processes. First, in personal pronouns and many kinship terms, gender is expressed lexically and in suppletive forms: *hij/er* ‘he’ vs. *zij/sie* ‘she’, *moeder/Mutter* ‘mother’ vs. *vader/Vater* ‘father’, *broer/Bruder* ‘brother’ vs. *zus/Schwester* ‘sister’ etc. In line with the principle of androcentricity, animals that are important, relevant and close to human beings follow that same pattern: *koe/Kuh* ‘cow’ vs.

²⁶“It is generally known that it is not possible to imagine a sexless individual. [N.V.]”

stier/Stier ‘bull’, *merrie/Stute* ‘mare’ vs. *hengst/Hengst* ‘stallion’ etc. (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 76-77). In accordance with relevance theory, those features that are highly relevant are likely to be marked suppletively, as they are morphologically preferably close to the lexical root. In highly relevant contexts, they may thus completely fuse with it (Bybee 1985). Semantic relevance is thus reflected in the morphological behaviour of linguistic forms, and these can be put on a relevance cline, as in Fig. 2.2.

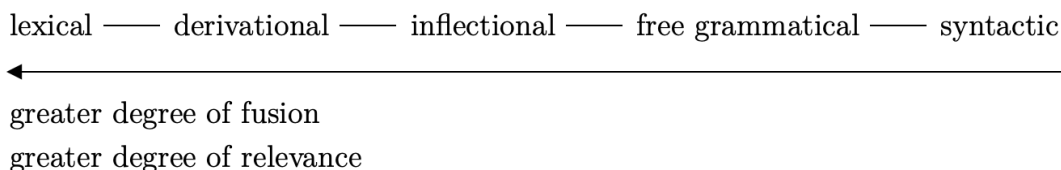


Figure 2.2: Relevance-based degrees of fusion (adapted from Bybee 1985: 12).

Further proof that relevance interferes with gender marking is provided by cross-cultural comparison. In Icelandic, for example, fish are more culturally relevant than in the Dutch- or German-speaking area. Icelandic has suppletive morphology to distinguish male from female fish: *hængur* ‘male salmon’ vs. *hrygna* ‘female salmon’ and *brimil* ‘male seal’ vs. *urta* ‘female seal’ (Nübling 2001: 195).

Other nouns that refer to human beings are not formed suppletively, but gender marking takes place through affixation and, in some cases, compounding. Suffixation is the main pattern in both Dutch and German, whereby both languages, but mainly Dutch, display some inconsistencies, as demonstrated in the previous sections. For instance, Dutch *professor* ‘professor.¬F’ is never feminised, whereas *docent* ‘lecturer.¬F’ can unproblematically be feminised by means of the suffix *-e*. However, between *professor* and *docent*, there is no difference in individuation or animacy from an andro- or egocentric perspective. However, nouns in *-ent* are easily feminisable through *-e* (*docente* ‘lecturer.F’), while nouns in *-or* apparently experience a restriction here (cf. also *lector* ‘lecturer, reader.¬F’). Thus, the Animacy or Individuation Hierarchy alone cannot fully explain the relatively complex system of Dutch gender marking. It may, however, help explain why feminisation in German trickles

down to seemingly inanimate contexts such as the example in (20).²⁷

Syntax can be an alternative to gender marking. On the one hand, nouns that are never feminised, such as Dutch *professor*, can be paraphrased as *vrouwelijke professor* ‘female professor’, if need be. After all, sex does not necessarily play a role in every context. That sex is nevertheless marked in nearly every German PN whenever the referent is female, regardless of the relevance of the referent’s sex in the context, may thus well be a by-product of other factors that overrule semantic relevance on the basis of androcentricity. On the other hand, the sex of referents that are too low on the animacy scale to partake in the process of gender marking, may sometimes be relevant in certain contexts. In line with a theory of relevance, which predicts that synthetic sex marking of, e.g., insects or molluscs is unlikely, sex can thus be marked syntactically as well. This androcentric effect was confirmed using corpus-based material by Lind & Späth (2022). The authors found that a lower degree of animacy (i.e., animals that are conceptually further away from humans) correlated with low degrees of fusion as in syntactic or compositional sex marking. By contrast, high degrees of animacy of animals close to human beings correlate with synthetic sex marking (Lind & Späth 2022: 122-123).

2.3.2 Pragmatics: referentiality

In the previous section, referentiality was introduced as an intrinsic component of the Animacy Hierarchy. The gradation PRONOUN > PROPER NAME > COMMON NOUN is included in Silverstein’s Hierarchy as one of three “functional dimension[s]”, next to person and the semantic notion of animacy itself (Croft 2002: 130). Referentiality itself is “ein abgestuftes Konzept” (‘a graded concept’, Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 92) and, more so than the semantic concept of animacy, it is mainly understood pragmatically. Definiteness and specificity are properties that contribute to referentiality, as well as identifiability and visibility (ibid.: 92-93). For Givón, the wider phenomenon is pragmatic referentiality, although “it nonetheless contains residual logico-semantic characteristics” (1984: 120) in that, in the Saussurian sense,

²⁷Cf. Chapter 7 for an analysis.

linguistic signs carry a *signifié*. Each sign has a referent that can be identified “strictly within the atomic proposition in which they occur, and without recourse to a wider extrapropositional context” (ibid.: 121). With his assumption that expressions “refer to those [individuals] existing in some ‘universe of discourse’” Givón (1984: 120) essentially argues against early conceptions of referentiality, such as the one outlined by Russell (1905).²⁸ Here, reference can only exist insofar as a term²⁹ relates to an entity that is part of the “Real World” (Givón: ibid.). With Lyons (1977: 176), reference can be summarised as “a relation [...] between expressions and what they stood for on particular occasions of their utterance.” Referentiality, then, relates to the accessibility of such referents (i.e., what/who an expression stands for) in variable contexts, which renders it a graded phenomenon. Considering the role of referentiality in grammar, a referentiality scale can be assumed, which predicts the occurrence of a formal marker in grammatical constructions (cf. among others von Heusinger & Kaiser (2011) for differential object marking (DOM) in Spanish, Kızılkaya et al. (2022) for DOM in Turkish and Uzbek, Guntsetseg & Klein (2009) for case alternation in Mongolian). The scale, as found in the sources cited here, is an elaboration of Silverstein’s and Croft’s three-part cline and takes the following shape:

- (22) PERSONAL PRONOUN > PROPER NOUN > DEFINITE NP >
 INDEFINITE SPECIFIC NP > INDEFINITE NON-SPECIFIC NP

In relation to gender marking on PNs, referentiality influences the probability of a gender marker occurring along the lines of this scale (cf. Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 93 and the discussion below). As described in the previous section, gender marking can take a suppletive shape in line with its relevance (which is andro- and egocentrically determined). This is undeniably true of pronouns and proper nouns, whose forms are adapted to their referent’s sex (cf. *hij/er* ‘he’ vs. *zij/sie* ‘she’, or the fact that most proper names are sex-specific). Further down the referentiality scale, the degree of coalescence should be lower, in accordance

²⁸Russell does not use the words *referentiality* or *reference*. Rather, what is now widely understood as reference, he calls denotation (cf. Lyons’ (1977) differentiation of reference and denotation further below). To Russell (1905), only such propositions that have a real-world referent have a denotation (reference).

²⁹*Terms* are also referred to as *propositions* or *expressions*.

with a theory of relevance. Suffixation, as found in feminisation of PNs, can occur in different kinds of NPs, with higher odds of feminisation in definite and/or specific NPs, because these have specific referents whose sex is usually known. The following German examples illustrate the correlation between feminisation and referentiality in (in)definite and (non-)specific NPs:

- (23) **Die** **Ärztin** Dr. Sigrun Schaller ist diesen Weg gegangen – und
 the.FEM.DEF.SPEC doctor.F. Dr. Sigrun Schaller is this way gone – and
 empfiehlt ihn seither mit Begeisterung ihren Patientinnen und Patienten.
 recommends it since with enthusiasm to.her patients.F and patients.¬F
 ‘The doctor Sigrun Schaller took this path – and recommends it since then enthusi-
 astically to her patients.’

(deTenTen20 [34169924], lady-business.at)

- (24) Zudem sollte vor jeder größeren Diät **ein** **Arzt**
 moreover should before every larger diet a.MASC.¬DEF.¬SPEC doctor.¬F
 befragt werden, damit durchaus einhergehende gesundheitliche Risiken im
 consulted be so.that sometimes accompanying health risks in
 voraus ausgeschlossen werden können.
 advance excluded be can
 ‘Furthermore, before every diet a doctor should be consulted, so that possible ac-
 companying health risks can be excluded in advance.’

(deTenTen20 [716884], diaet-tipp.de)

In (23) the referent is known, and the context is definite and specific. In contrast to such examples, there is the use of *Arzt* in (24), in which it is indefinite and non-specific. Although possible referents of *Arzt* can also be women, the noun is not feminised.³⁰ This syntactic context merely correlates with the referential context: there are examples such as the aforementioned in (17). Here, the noun *Existenzialist* ‘existentialist.¬F’ is joined by a definite article, and it does not syntactically differ from the structure in (23). Nevertheless, it is used generically. Reference is thus, per Lyon’s definition, utterance-bound. Conversely, denotation is “a relation that applies in the first instance to lexemes and holds independently

³⁰In light of gender-fair language use, other options than the generic use of masculine *Arzt* would have been available.

of particular occasions of utterances” (Lyons 1977: 208). This distinction has proven to be relevant in discussions surrounding the so-called generic masculine in German (and, to a lesser extent, in Dutch). Both proponents and opponents of its use argue in terms of denotation: the denotation of masculine personal nouns is regarded as generic (i.e., independent of a possible referent’s sex) by the former, and as sex-specific by the latter. That feminisation is less likely to occur in generic than in explicitly female contexts, is not surprising.³¹ To avoid essentialist reasoning, a usage-based and discourse-oriented outlook on the permanent emergence of linguistic structures is helpful.

One specific environment in which a PN can occur will be singled out for analysis here, because this is the context that will form the basis for the case studies later on. The context in question is predicative. Here, the referent is not introduced by the PN itself but by its antecedent. In such environments, not one but two expressions refer to a single referent, as in (26). For all of the following examples, let us assume that the referent is female:

- (25) a. **Die Ärztin**, die ich gestern kennengelernt habe, macht viele
 the.FEM doctor.FEM who.F I yesterday met have makes many
 Überstunden.
 overtime
 ‘The doctor I met yesterday often works overtime.’
- b. ?**Der Arzt**, den ich gestern kennengelernt habe, macht
 the.MASC doctor.¬F who.MASC I yesterday met have makes
 viele Überstunden.
 many overtime
 ‘The doctor I met yesterday often works overtime.’
- (26) a. Meine Mutter ist **Ärztin**.
 my mother is doctor.F
 ‘My mother is a doctor.’
- b. Meine Mutter ist **Arzt**.
 my mother is doctor.¬F
 ‘My mother is a doctor.’

³¹The issue from a feminist point of view is that, if non-feminised forms have exclusive male semantics, then they should be just as unsuitable in generic contexts as feminised forms. The fact that they are still used as generic forms is the aforementioned linguistic expression of sexism.

Under the premise that the referent is female, (25a) is expected to be the default choice over (25b), both in production and in acceptability. Though the same preference likely goes for the sentences in (26), (26b) is still expected to be more acceptable than (25b). Both *Ärztin* and *Arzt* in (26) refer to *meine Mutter* and thus have a female referent, but in (25), the degree of referentiality of the position in which the PN occurs is much higher, in favour of the identifiability of its referent. In other words, the PN is preferably feminised in (25) to facilitate reference tracking, i.e., “whether reference is being made to the same or to a different participant” (Comrie 1999: 335). A non-feminised form, for a lack of other gendered information in (25), would hinder this reference tracking, i.e., it would be overruled by a conversational implicature resulting from the masculine noun *Arzt*. An example from Becker (2008: 66) illustrates this implicature: if a speaker of German tells his wife that he is going to have dinner *mit einem Kollegen* ‘with a colleague.¬F’ and if this colleague is a woman, then leaving out feminising morphology would be (perhaps intentionally) misleading. This is not true of Dutch, as Hüning (2020: 86) notes, where *collega* ‘colleague’ does not have a feminised counterpart and the referent’s sex would have to be made contextually explicit. The marking of gender morphology is thus not always dependent on the referent’s sex, because in some contexts gender information is irrelevant in reference tracking. A lack of gender cues can lead to a false implicature; the notion of referentiality is decisive therein. Hence, not only the semantic aspect of animacy plays a crucial role (in all example sentences, the referent is equally animate), but also the pragmatic notion of referentiality. It is a well-known process of language change that implied or connoted features of a form can become fixed parts of that form’s denotation. This is the result of “continual citation and re-citation of certain communicative behaviours” (Motschenbacher 2016: 66-67); it is the provisional materialisation of structures that emerge from discourse. In the case of feminisation of PNs, the idea is that the more a PN is feminised in non-referential contexts, the less the alternative – a non-feminised form – is suitable as a form including non-male referents. By implication, the exclusive use of a PN such as *Arzt* for male referents only, even in non-referential contexts such as (26b), can cause its denotation to shift from non-sex-specified to sex-specified.

Predicatives, as in (26), are thus widely observed as typical contexts in which feminisation may not take place (Doleschal 1992: 72; Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 93; Dammel 2021: 154 for generic use of the masculine evaluative suffix *-i* in Alemannic; Ek & Nystrand 2021: 205 for the use of generic masculine animal names). Still, it seems that gender marking in predicatives in German is still preferred (this will be empirically explored in Chapter 7). Following Lehmann (2005), this occurrence of feminising morphology may be regarded as an instance of hypercharacterisation, or pleonasm on the level of grammar. By way of illustration, Table 2.5 shows the occurrence of a small number of PNs in predicative, post-copular position in the nlTenTen20 and the deTenTen20 corpora. This preliminary data supports the idea that gender marking in German is preferred. Personal-noun continuations to German *sie ist...* ‘she is’ and *er ist...* ‘he is’ as well as Dutch *zij/ze is...* ‘she is’ and *hij is...* ‘he is’ were searched for.

	SIE IST...	ER IST...		ZIJ/ZE IS...	HIJ IS...
<i>Ingenieurin</i> ‘engineer.F’	18	0	?	0	0
<i>Lehrerin</i> ‘teacher.F’	500	0	<i>lerares</i> ‘teacher.F’	72	0
<i>Anwältin</i> ‘lawyer.F’	77	0	<i>advocate</i> ‘lawyer.F’	23	0
<i>Ingenieur</i> ‘engineer.¬F’	5	177	<i>ingenieur</i> ‘engineer.¬F’	6	44
<i>Lehrer</i> ‘teacher.¬F’	4	453	<i>leraar</i> ‘teacher.¬F’	9	167
<i>Anwalt</i> ‘lawyer.¬F’	12	183	<i>advocaat</i> ‘lawyer.¬F’	48	135

Table 2.5: Three PNs in predicative position (nlTenTen20 and deTenTen20), absolute token frequencies.

While there is a clear tendency to feminise personal nouns in predicative position in German as a continuation after *sie ist...* ‘she is’, the tendency is less clear in Dutch. For *ingenieur* ‘engineer.¬F’ no feminised noun is in use (cf. also Table 2.1), and non-feminised *advocaat* ‘lawyer.¬F’ is more than twice as frequent as its feminised counterpart after *zij/ze is...* ‘she

is’.

Returning to gender marking on PNs in predicative environments and their link to referentiality, it is important to note that this process is not formally motivated. In other words, gender-marking morphemes do not form part of nouns in order to ensure syntactic feminine agreement between a subject and its predicate (e.g., between *Mutter* and *Ärztin* in the examples above; this is the empirical point of focus in Chapter 7). For Steele (1978: 610), “[a]greement commonly refers to some systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another.” An abstraction of that definition that leaves out the systematicity condition is proposed by Bickel & Nichols (2007: 229): “Agreement is the phenomenon by which a word carries morphological features that originate somewhere else.” Adopting this notion of agreement, we may assume that feminisation of the PN is a formal property that reflects the semantic property of its referent. With Corbett (2006: 4), “[w]e call the element which determines the agreement [...] the controller”, and “[t]he element whose form is determined by agreement is the target.” In the case of sentences like (26), the form *Ärztin* is thus directly based on (i.e., agrees with) an extralinguistic property, namely its referent’s female sex. In the case of predication, as in the examples that contain both *Mutter* and *Ärztin*, but also in the [*sie ist/zij is*] constructions in Table 2.5, the subject and the predicative PN are coreferential in that both expressions “simply happen to refer to the same referent in the discourse” (Croft 2013: 99). If the right conditions are met, that is, “when the referent is sufficiently highly accessible” (ibid.), then feminisation is no longer required to ensure successful reference tracking – unless the above-mentioned covariance between two properties (say, the female semantics of the referent on the one hand and feminisation on the other hand) is in fact systematic. Put differently, accessibility of the referent in predicative contexts is warranted by its introduction through the antecedent. After all, reiterating Searle (1969), referring expressions are utterances (cf. Lyons 1977) used to identify one object and single it out from other objects. The speaker then goes on to say something about this object, which is what the term predication stands for (Searle 1969: 26f.). Feminisation on the basis of the referent’s sex, as in (26a) above, is thus a case

of semantic gender agreement, or notional agreement (Matthews 1997: 248), i.e., a formal characteristic on a noun, triggered by a semantic characteristic of its referent. Thus, while the definition by Steele sees agreement as a systematic covariance, the term is often used in a more liberal way as simply a semantically or formally motivated covariance, whether systematic or not. In introducing this notion of agreement, we have gotten to the investigative core of this work, which is concerned principally with the regularity of the semantically determined covariance in Dutch and in German.

Under the assumption that German PNs are more regularly feminised than Dutch PNs, even in predicative pleonastic contexts, the question remains as to why this should be the case. It is observed that in Germanic there is at least a strong correlation, synchronically as well as diachronically, between the existence of a grammatical masculine/feminine gender distinction and feminisation of PNs in the case of a female referent (Nübling 2000: 215; Doleschal 2015: 1165). For this, an Agreement Hierarchy seems relevant. Fig. 2.3 shows a pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy, which is essentially an adaptation of Corbett’s syntax-based Hierarchy (Corbett 1979: 204) in (27):

(27) ATTRIBUTE > PREDICATE > RELATIVE PRONOUN > PERSONAL PRONOUN

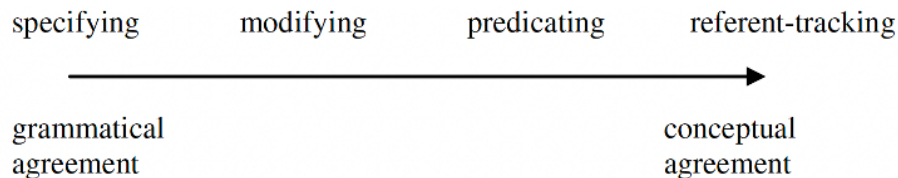


Figure 2.3: The pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy (Köpcke, Panther & Zubin 2010: 179)

Corbett (1991: 226) observes that, “[a]s we move rightwards along the hierarchy, the likelihood of semantic agreement will increase monotonically (that is, with no intervening decrease).” In the pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy, pragmatic functions corresponding to syntactic functions are brought into focus. Building on Searle’s Speech Act Theory (cf. Searle 1969), Köpcke et al. (2010) take the propositional act as the base, which Searle subdivides into predication and reference. Reference tracking and predication were introduced

above. Their placement on the Hierarchy in Fig. 2.3 runs parallel to the likelihood of feminising morphology being used, as demonstrated by means of the examples in (25) – referent-tracking – and (26) – predicating. Köpcke, Panther & Zubin (2010: 179) believe for the modified pragmatics-based Hierarchy to have an explanatory rather than a descriptive function. They further note that shifts in discourse can significantly contribute to a shift in agreement. For example, they uncover a tendency to switch from formal to conceptual agreement when semantic properties are to be made more salient in texts. For example, they show that pronoun targets of the controller noun *Mädchen* ‘girl’, which is grammatically neuter, will shift from neuter to feminine (*es* ‘it’ to *sie* ‘she’) when the discourse shifts from neutral to sexual(ising) (ibid.: 190). This principle is further empirically investigated and confirmed by Hübner (2021). Hence, based on the theory and the Hierarchy in Fig. 2.3, a noun is most likely to receive feminising morphology if the pragmatic conditions require feminisation, i.e., if it serves reference tracking and/or if female semantics are a salient part of the context in predication. Feminisation is thus treated here as the agreement feature itself, in line with its analysis as an instance of semantic agreement between a referent’s sex and a formal feature of a noun.

Feminisation itself does not occur in a specifying or modifying function, but the words associated with it do. Modification, which was first introduced by Croft (1990: 248), and specification are both associated with formal gender agreement, as they refer to adjectives in the case of modifiers and determiners such as articles in the case of specifiers (Köpcke, Panther & Zubin 2010: 180). In the case of feminisation, the specifiers and modifiers of feminised items are marked differentially in German only. (Standard/Northern) Dutch feminised and non-feminised items are both in the *utrum*, or common-gender, category (*een goede journaliste* ‘a.UTR good.UTR journalist.F’ vs. *een goede journalist* ‘a.UTR good.UTR journalist.¬F’). There is no further association of a specific gender category with feminisation. In other words, there is no lexical gender that coincides with referential gender in Standard Dutch: lexical gender of feminised and non-feminised items alike is the *utrum*, while referential gender depends on the referent’s sex. Feminised and non-feminised nouns in German are

distributed complementarily over the feminine and masculine genders, respectively (*eine gute Journalistin* ‘a.FEM good.FEM journalist.F’ vs. *ein-ø guter Journalist* ‘a.MASC good.MASC journalist.¬F’), with some exceptions discussed in the previous sections. It will be shown in the following chapter (cf. Section 3.1.2) that this gender distribution is relevant to feminisation, because sex is the semantic core of grammatical gender. Grammatical gender, in turn, supports the preservation of feminisation.

So far, it was demonstrated that gender marking accommodates to the referential gender of a referent with increasing intensity the more we go up the Animacy/Individuation Hierarchy and down the Agreement Hierarchy, into the pragmatic domains of predication and referent-tracking. Feminisation is most likely to occur in functions that serve referent-tracking. The options that are available in a system may vary: in Dutch, there is no specific grammatical gender available for feminised PNs, and hence, adnominal elements do not follow a pattern dictated by feminisation. It should also be noted that even for reference tracking, feminisation is not always available in Dutch, e.g., in PNs such as *ingenieur* ‘engineer.¬F’. In German, on the other hand, the morphology of modifiers and specifiers is adapted to referential gender, which is expressed in feminising morphology. Furthermore, it can be assumed that feminisation is preferred both in predication and in reference tracking. Referentiality and its relation with feminisation leaves one issue open, which will be investigated in the case study in Chapter 6: What motivates the occurrence of feminisation in predication, i.e., when feminisation does not serve reference tracking? Building on findings concerning conceptual agreement with hybrid nouns such as *Mädchen* ‘girl’, it can be assumed that feminisation is determined by the relevance of sex-marking, for example in contexts in which social gender is pragmatically relevant.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, feminisation was introduced as an overarching process that consists of various morphological processes, with one shared function, namely, the marking of female sex on a noun denoting a human being. While feminisation is often discussed within a framework

of markedness, such an analysis is problematic. First, an analysis of feminisation as an instance of semantic markedness on one noun implies the semantic genericity of another. This analysis has proven problematic in light of empirical findings, and it cannot constitute an absolute rule: the lexical semantics of one noun can be more sex-biased than those of another noun. Second, feminisation does not require a morpheme to be added to a masculine base, neither crosslinguistically nor within individual language systems. Morphological asymmetry (unmarked masculine vs. marked feminine) is not a necessary requirement of feminisation, and even when it occurs, it does not necessarily reflect semantic asymmetry (generic vs. female). Looking at the nouns that can be feminised in Dutch and German, it is clear that not every [+human] noun is feminisable in Dutch on the one hand, and that there is no restriction to [+human] or even [+animate] nouns in German on the other hand. These observations can be interpreted in a framework of animacy, individuation, and referentiality. The likelihood of a PN being feminised is context-dependent. Here, referentiality plays a crucial role. Feminisation can be understood as semantic agreement between a property of a referent (sex) and a formal marker, the feminising morpheme (Steele 1978: 610; Bickel & Nichols 2007: 229). The probability of this formal marker being used then depends on its relevance or necessity in disambiguation, as a means of reference tracking and avoidance of misleading conversational implicatures. Considering that predicatives are non-referential but have an attributive function, a lower frequency of feminised forms in these syntactic contexts than in contexts that generally refer directly to referents and are associated with agency is expected. For this reason, the main point of interest in the empirical part of this work will be PNs in a predicative position. As feminisation is less likely in such contexts, this has two consequences. First, the decreasing frequency of feminisation as a process should be best traceable in non-referential contexts, where it is less needed and thus less likely to occur (predicted for Dutch). Second, its occurrence in such contexts, while semantically redundant, points to high productivity of the process (predicted for German). In the following chapter, the focus will move from general, crosslinguistically valid measures to a comparative perspective on feminisation in light of the inherent systemic preconditions of grammatical gender.

3 The grammatical status of feminisation

3.1 Resemanticisation of gender or: sex-based gender

It is widely assumed that the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) gender system was animacy- and agency-based, in other words: individuation was the steering semantic factor behind the PIE gender system. It consisted of what is now known as masculine gender for animates and neuter gender for inanimates (Duke 2009: 42, 83). Only in later Indo-European did the feminine gender emerge, thereby creating a threefold gender system that was still intact in Germanic (Duke 2009: 42). Since Brugmann (1897) it is commonly accepted that the feminine gender entered the system as a class for abstract and/or collective nouns (cf. Tichy 1993; Litscher 2009; Luraghi 2009), although the exact development of the PIE gender system is subject to debate. According to Tichy (1993), the feminine gender stems from collective nouns, i.e., PIE neuter nouns that are marked with a suffix **-ah₂-*. These were then reanalysed as single female entities in the post-PIE phase: e.g., the etymology of the noun *widow* is reconstructed as PIE **h₂uid^héuah₂* ‘family of the deceased’ (Tichy 1993: 16). Litscher (2009: 271) and Luraghi (2009: 6-8) point out that collectives and abstracts are semantically closely related,³² and that they constitute one morphological class in many languages. Hence, collectives can be subsumed under the denominator ‘abstracts’ and this class is taken as the source for the feminine gender (Litscher 2009: 283).

In an alternative analysis, Luraghi (2009) suggests that both the collective and the feminine spring from abstracts, and that therefore the feminine can only be traced back to abstracts. In her account, the inanimate, neuter pole of the twofold PIE gender system is split up into two classes based on different degrees of individuation: one class for inanimate concrete nouns (the neuter), and one class for abstract nouns (the feminine). With the presence of nouns denoting female entities in the new class, the organisation of the PIE noun class system then switched from an individuation-based system to one based on referential gender, at which point the two most individuated categories (the highly individuated mascu-

³²This will play a role later on, when feminisation in inanimate contexts is analysed (cf. Chapter 7).

line for humans, and the moderately individuated feminine for abstracts) became reanalysed as classes representing two referential genders (Luraghi 2009: 10-11). From then on, in later PIE, animate nouns that had been in the masculine class in early PIE switched to the feminine class if their referent was human and female (ibid.). Here, for the first time, gender became associated with sex, at the top of the Animacy Hierarchy. The threefold PIE gender system was, unlike current Germanic gender systems, a grammatical category in the truest sense of the word. It allowed for a choice from a set of options, depending on the discourse context in which the inflected noun appeared. Examples are spelled out by Lehmann: The reconstructed PIE nouns listed below came in three different nominative forms, all pertaining to a different gender, and all of those carried different semantics that placed them on different levels of the individuation scale (1958: 191):

- I. Individual, singular: *g^hymós* ‘cold, frost’ (MASC)
- II. Collective, abstract: *g^hymáh* ‘winter’ (FEM)
- III. Resultative, mass: *g^hymóm* ‘snow’ (NEUT)

The masculine in I is to be understood as a singulative, individual occurrence of the collective feminine noun in II, namely cold or frost as singular phenomena within the larger, collective phenomenon of winter (cf. also Leiss 1999: 241). Individuation has later assumed a leading position in grammar again; it plays a role in the development of the Dutch pronominal gender system after the M/F distinction had gone lost (cf. Audring 2006, 2009), and in the restructuring of the German gender-assignment system (cf. Köpcke 2000; Nübling & Kempf 2020). Both developments will be discussed in the following sections.

Changes in Germanic itself are of more relevance to the current status of the Dutch and German gender systems. Importantly, the nominal system of Proto-Germanic (PGM) was organised in declensions, and these in turn were largely based on semantic principles and therefore for the most part transparent – the original semantic functional feature in PIE was animacy- and individuation-related, as mentioned above. Declension classes would go on to play a significant role in developments in Dutch and German. They differ from genders

in that “gender systems affect the inflection of elements such as pronouns, adjectives and verbs,³³ declensions are restricted to the noun’s inflection only” (Duke 2009: 11). The idea that agreement, i.e., the reflection of gender on the inflection of adnominal elements, must have played a significant role in the development of Germanic gender, stems from Hermann Paul (1880). Early PGM retained large parts of the PIE declension class system, which became increasingly opaque as a consequence of phonological change in PGM. Crucially, phonological attrition caused the primary suffix on nouns, which preceded the inflectional suffix, held semantic information, and served as the main declension-class marker, to be reduced or even vanish. As a result, the PGM declension class system lost its transparency for the most part (Duke 2009: 87). In the following phase, declension classes were reorganised in PGM, with genders as the main steering category (ibid.: 88). This situation thus applies to both Dutch and German, although they went different directions after PGM.

3.1.1 Dutch gender diachronically

Due to the meager data situation for OD, there is not much research on the category gender for this period. Duke (2009: 191) keeps her statement on OD short: “[i]t is assumed that, by and large, ONL [= OD, N.V.] fit the Old Germanic mould.” Nevertheless, OD differs from other Germanic languages at this stage in that there appears to be no gender differentiation in the plural (Duke 2009: 192), and, more specifically, “[f]eminine and masculine nouns already shared most nominative plural markers” (Kürschner & Nübling 2011: 376). Drawing from 13th-century legal texts, Marynissen (1996) demonstrates that declension classes were still present in Dutch to some extent. However, during the course of MD, the declension classes inherited from PGM fell victim to phonological attrition (Duke 2009: 197). While gender as a determining factor for German nominal inflection historically served as a “lifeline” in prohibiting inflection classes from turning into idiosyncratically arranged units (Kürschner 2008: 142, and cf. Section 3.1.2), Dutch declensions were reorganised to save and profile plural marking (Kürschner & Nübling 2011: 375). Gender marking itself became increasingly

³³Cf. Hockett’s definition of genders as “classes of nouns reflected in the behaviour of associated words” (Hockett 1958: 231).

restricted to adnominal elements from then on, although in this domain, too, syncretisms were numerous, e.g., the masculine and feminine gender in the nominative singular, *die* (Mulken 2021: 43). Although OD full vowels had been reduced to schwa in MD, and schwa had become the marker for the feminine gender, in later MD – between the 13th and the 15th centuries – these schwas were subsequently apocoped (ibid.: 45-46). By the end of the MD period, the masculine and feminine genders had merged into one common-gender category in the nominative, but not in other cases (Duke 2009: 202). Further developments in spoken post-medieval Dutch are difficult to trace, because they happened simultaneously with standardisation and thus prescriptive grammar writing, which attempted to uphold a threefold Dutch gender system. It is assumed that such prescriptive texts also contributed to conservative tendencies in language use, as they directly impacted to the use of gender in important and widely known texts such as the *Statenbijbel* ‘State Bible’ (ibid.: 202-203), which was published in 1637. Such prescriptive texts were in print until ca. 1900 (cf. Section 4.3.1). Due to the merger of the masculine and feminine nominal genders in Dutch, at first at least in spoken Dutch, formerly masculine and feminine animate nouns became part of one common-gender category. This system may thus be analysed as linked with animacy, although Audring (2023) maintains that the link is “weak, as the class of common gender nouns is very large and the majority of nouns denote inanimates.”

Importantly, while during the course of Early MoD the masculine and the feminine gender doubtlessly merged into one *utrum* category in Northern Dutch varieties, they are preserved to date to some extent in Southern Dutch varieties (De Vogelaer & De Sutter 2011; De Vos & De Vogelaer 2011; De Vogelaer et al. 2020), mostly toward the region West Flanders (De Vogelaer & De Sutter 2011; De Vogelaer et al. 2020). This has caused diatopic variation in the recognition of the historical grammatical gender of nouns, which is well investigated, both in corpus-based (Audring 2006, 2009) and experimental scholarship (cf. the above sources). More precisely, there are significant differences between the use of anaphoric pronouns to inanimate nouns in Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch. Speakers of Belgian Dutch tend to use the feminine pronoun *zij/ze* in reference to a historically feminine inanimate noun and the

masculine *hij* in reference to a historically masculine inanimate noun. Conversely, this gender contrast is no longer transparent for speakers of Netherlandic Dutch. This has caused the pronominal system to become reorganised based on the Individuation Hierarchy (Audring 2006, 2009).³⁴ Concretely, the neuter gender on the pronominal level is increasingly being used in lowly individuated contexts (28). The masculine is associated with male humans (29a) and with inanimates higher up the Hierarchy, such as bounded objects (29b). The feminine has become restricted to female human reference (30). Hence, neuter inanimate nouns can be anaphorically pronominalised by masculine *hij* ‘he’, common-gender nouns by neuter *het* ‘it’, in accordance with the Individuation Hierarchy.

- (28) een decanteerfles. daar stop je je **wijn** in en dan kan je ‘t
 a decanter. there put you your wine.UTR in and then can you it.NEUT
 luchten.
 breathe

‘A decanter. You put your wine in there and then it can breathe.’

(cit. Audring 2009: 97-98)

- (29) a. m’n **broertje** en ik schelen twee jaar dus toen ik acht was was
 my brother.DIM.NEUT and I differ two year so when I eight was was
hij zes en toen mocht **hij** ook om acht uur naar bed
 he.MASC six and then was.allowed he.MASC also at eight o’clock to bed
 ‘My (little) brother and I are two years apart. So when I was eight, he was six,
 and he was also allowed to go to bed at eight o’clock.’

(cit. Audring 2009: 83-84)

- b. dat **masker** dat je ouders hebben gekocht vind ik niet zo nou ja...
 that mask.NEUT that your parents have bought find I not so now well...
hij is wel leuk maar
 he.MASC is quite nice but
 ‘That mask that your parents have bought, I don’t really think it’s so... it’s quite
 nice, but...’

(cit. Audring 2009: 86)

³⁴Recall the Hierarchy (cf. Section 2.3.1): HUMAN > OTHER ANIMATE > BOUNDED OBJECT/ABSTRACT > SPECIFIC MASS > UNSPECIFIC MASS/UNBOUNDED ABSTRACT (Audring 2006: 102; Audring 2009: 127).

- (30) een **meisje** met 'tzelfde badpak. en **ze** is ook blond.
 a girl.NEUT with the.same swimsuit and she.FEM is also blonde
 ‘A girl with the same swimsuit. And she is blonde, too.’

(cit. Audring 2009: 93)

Kraaikamp (2017b) finds that this tendency already existed in Middle Dutch, where masculine and feminine nouns with very low degrees of individuation (hence, animacy) sometimes triggered neuter gender agreement on associated words, be they anaphoric pronouns, like in the above examples, or adnominal elements within the NP (31):³⁵

- (31) Ende **dien** **claren** **ghesuiverden zeem** doet in eenen pot. Aldus
 and the.MASC clear.MASC purified.MASC honey.MASC put in a pot thus
 sal men-**t** orboren in den ipocras
 shall one-it.NEUT use in the hippocras
 ‘And put the clear, purified honey in a put. As such, it will be used in the hippocras.’

(cit. Kraaikamp 2017b: 283)

This substantiates the aforementioned findings concerning the late-MD gender system, which – at least in the nominative – already displayed a merger of the masculine and the feminine genders. Due to the loss of masculine and feminine morphology, the referential compensation mechanism was based on individuation. Likewise, in terms of gender assignment to nouns, a range of Dutch nouns were assigned a neuter gender. The result was variation, because these neuter forms (*het*-words) existed next to their original common-gender forms (*de*-words). Examples found by Semplicini (2012) are, among others, *de/het boek* ‘the book’, *de/het doolhof* ‘the labyrinth’, *de/het drop* ‘the licorice’, *de/het marsepein* ‘the marzipan’, *de/het matras* ‘the mattress’ etc. Here, degree of individuation plays a significant role as well:

If one views article shifts in DGNs [Double Gender Nouns, i.e., hybrid nouns] as a gender agreement phenomenon rather than a case of unstable gender assignment, then the relevant agreement patterns appear to be semantically and

³⁵28% of masculine and feminine antecedents whose referents are low on the individuation hierarchy, i.e., masses and unbounded abstracts, triggered neuter gender agreement (Kraaikamp 2017b: 279-282).

pragmatically motivated: Nouns whose referents are characterised by a high degree of individuation tend to trigger common agreement, while nouns with less individuated referents are more likely to trigger neuter agreement.

(Semplicini 2012: 176)

In short, Dutch nominal gender has lost its connection with sex, which has caused pronominal gender to have become resemanticised based on exactly this feature. This connection has become lost in Netherlandic (and Standard) Dutch, but less so in Belgian Dutch varieties. The difference between Northern and Southern Standard Dutch language use is a main concern in Chapter 6.

3.1.2 German gender diachronically

Traces of the aforementioned threefold PIE gender system, that allowed for a choice between one of multiple genders, are still found in Old High German (Leiss 1999, 2005; Froschauer 2003). The OHG noun *buoh* ‘book’, for instance, is attested in all three genders, depending on its use as a singular book (in which case it is masculine), the collective use for the different books of the Bible (feminine), as well as the plural neuter for different chapters within a book. Note that at this point the plural neuter overlaps both semantically and formally with the feminine singular (Leiss 2005: 17), a remnant from the above described developments regarding the neuter and the feminine gender in PIE. Notwithstanding visible remnants inherited from PIE, the multiple-gender feature of OHG is a lot weaker than in PIE, and the exclusive semantics that were attached to PIE genders are found across genders in OHG (ibid.: 18).

Phonological change that had been taking place from PGM onwards continued its way through OHG and caused the reduction of unstressed vowels in Middle High German (Nübling et al. 2017: 45-46). Here the loss of gender morphology, both on the noun and on adnominal elements, stands in the way of formal transparency of the system. The development of the German gender system differs from the Dutch one in that German famously retained a threefold gender system, a feature that puts German in a rather unique position within

Germanic.³⁶ The German gender system and, connected with it, the declension system has been in a process of restructuring since at least the transition from MHG to NHG (Köpcke 2000: 107). Two points are relevant in this context, namely a) the fact that gender has become the main steering factor behind German declension classes (again), and b) that the restructuring of the semantically opaque MHG gender system has taken the semantic class of sex as its base. These two points will be detailed out below.

In the relation between gender and declensions (i.e., noun inflections) there are two conceivable directions: GenderFirst, whereby gender predicts declension-class affiliation, and DeclensionFirst, whereby declension class predicts gender affiliation (Enger 2004: 52). In German the link is bi-directional (Kürschner & Nübling 2011: 359). In the wake of phonological change, which caused a semantically transparent system to become increasingly opaque, gender took over the main structuring function of German declensions by OHG, followed by semantics. On the semantic level, the features of concreteness and animacy played a significant role (Kürschner 2008: 108), which in turn were connected to genders. Further phonological changes in MHG destabilised the organisation of declensions and disconnected it from its semantics (ibid.). As opposed to Dutch, German has retained gender as the main steering factor behind declensions. It resembles Swedish in this regard, although only German still has a threefold gender system (Kürschner & Dammel 2013: 56).

As genders become the main steering factor for declension classes, declensions in turn overtly mark gender affiliation of a noun. Gender marking is affected by the MHG reduction of unstressed syllables as well, causing a largely semantics-based restructuring of the German gender system, which fits well with typological observations from gender systems. While a large part of Dutch and German nouns receive their gender on seemingly arbitrary or formal grounds,³⁷ within the domain of animate nouns, the main gender-assignment criterion in German is sex. Dahl notes that typologically, “the relation between the poles [semantic

³⁶Luxemburgish and East Frisian also have a threefold gender system. Icelandic and Faroese have retained the PIE threefold gender system as well, but their isolated positions with limited language contact offer an explanation for the preservation of the threefold gender system.

³⁷Di Meola (2007) names syllable number and structure, as well as degree of integration in the lexicon as factors influencing gender assignment to German nouns.

– nonsemantic gender assignment, N.V.] tends to be asymmetric with respect to animacy: animate nouns normally get their gender by semantic rules, whereas inanimate nouns may or may not have semantic gender” (Dahl 2000: 101). Hence, gender systems like the German one, where animate nouns are assigned their gender based on their semantic properties, are what Corbett (2013) calls “sex-based”:

[T]here is an overlap between the nouns which take a particular set of agreements and some semantic feature. [...] In the familiar systems such as French and German, and indeed in the majority, the link is to biological sex.

(Corbett 2013)³⁸

In other words, while there are no clear semantically motivated gender-assignment rules for inanimate nouns, the default gender of animate nouns is based on their referent’s sex. Naturally, for a language system to be sex-based, coinciding morphological categories which can serve as markers for this particular semantic feature have to be present in the language system. This is true for German, which has an (ad)nominal masculine/feminine distinction correlating with the semantic features [+male] and [+female]. It is not true for Dutch, where this distinction has gone lost (but has been strengthened in the pronominal domain, cf. Section 3.1.1).

Köpcke (2000) analyses the development of masculine nouns in the transition from MHG to NHG. There is an increasingly strong tendency of animate, [+human] masculines to pass over to the weak declension class, while [-human] nouns increasingly leave the weak for the strong declension class. Phonology is a relevant feature therein as well, with the prototypical weakly inflected masculine noun being [+human], with a phonotactic trochaic structure, ending in schwa (Köpcke 2000: 111). He further demonstrates that the feminine is the gender associated with animates which are lower on the individuation scale: the further we move away from the generic human being, the more likely a noun with an animate referent with the same formal properties as the above described will pass over to the feminine gender

³⁸<http://wals.info/chapter/31> [Accessed 13-12-2022].

and thus a different declension class (Köpcke 2000: 115-116). This diachronic development of animate nouns that have shifted from the masculine to the feminine gender is displayed in Fig. 3.1.

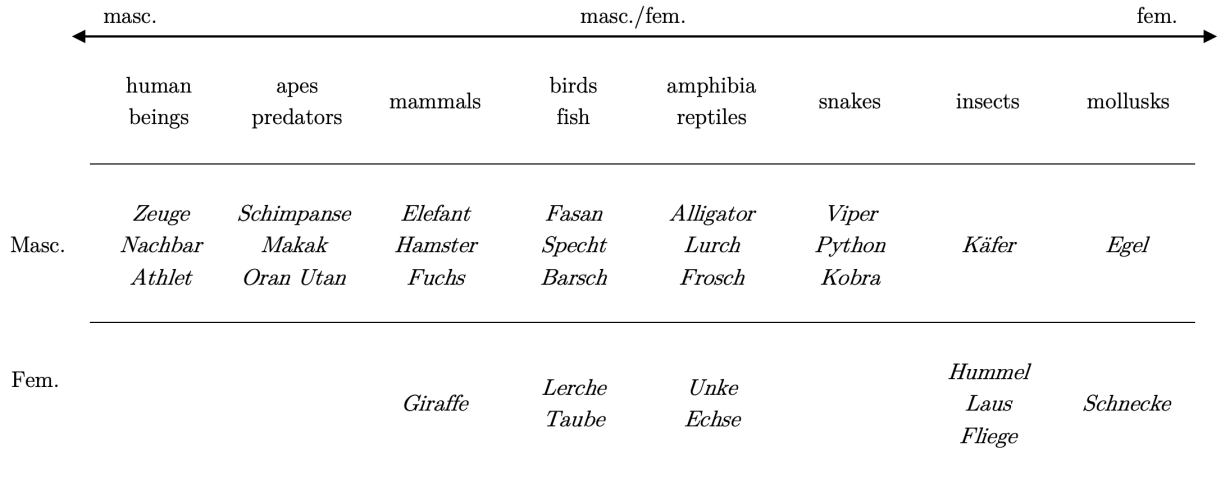


Figure 3.1: Androcentric continuum, adapted from Köpcke (2000: 117). Nouns that are lower on the animacy scale leave the masculine for the feminine gender.

This observation is in unison with the fact that in German, case on singular nouns is only coded overtly synthetically on non-feminine nouns. Particularly, nominative and all other non-nominative case are differentiated in the weak declension class, to which human masculines belong. The function of case, namely the expression of participant roles, fits with the function of the weak declension, and thus the masculine gender: animacy and thus agency. As the case reserved for agents, the nominative stands out morphologically between oblique cases, reserved for patient roles. Semantic roles are overtly marked in human masculines: “Generell ist eine Nom./Akk.-Distinktion sinnvoll, weil typischerweise belebte Objekte Handlungen auslösen (Agens), aber auch ein Ziel einer Handlung sein können (Patiens), und dieser wichtige Unterschied will klar markiert sein”³⁹ (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 67). All in all, the new semantic base for the German declension system is cited as an instance of

³⁹“Generally, a nom/acc distinction is useful, because typically animate entities trigger actions (agent), but they can also be the target of the action (patient), and this important difference should be clearly marked.” [N.V.]

resemanticisation (Nübling & Kempf 2020: 109), whereby a former semantic system, having become opaque and having been restructured based on genders, rebuilds its semantic core. As genders and declensions are bi-directionally determined, German declensions and genders share the same semantic background.

The “mysterious” perseverance of the threefold German gender system has been explained from various perspectives. Ronneberger-Sibold (1993, 1994, 1997) sees the robust framing construction in German as the cause. Genders are overtly marked on the determiner within the NP. With the noun, the determiner forms the nominal framing construction. As framing constructions are a prominent syntactic feature of German, elements that can help it survive, such as the overt marking of genders, have been preserved. In turn, Ronneberger-Sibold (2020) views the rise of the definite article in OHG as the determinant for the development and fixation of the framing construction. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Trudgill (2013) sees the maintenance of (High) German genders, as opposed to their loss in other Germanic varieties, in relation to language contact. In his view, the contact situation in the High German area should be seen as “a normal situation where a continuous native-speaker tradition is maintained” (Trudgill 2013: 90). He further explains:

[W]here native speakers transmit their language from one generation to another in the normal way, as with German, the fact that there may also be non-natives around who are speaking simplified versions of the language will normally have no effect on this transmission whatsoever.

(Trudgill 2013: 90)

Trudgill thereby contrasts the German situation with that of Bergen (Norway), where gender simplifications are caused by long-term contact in an urbanised environment with the right demographic setting: nearly half of Bergen’s population in the 15th century was foreign (ibid.: 90-91).

Resemanticisation of German gender has caused it to become closely associated with sex. Instead of one class for all animate nouns, they have been divided over two different

grammatical classes in accordance with the referent's sex. In this respect, Doleschal (2015) points out the following:

The close interrelation between derivational gender marking and grammatical gender supports the conclusion that grammatical gender is in itself an indicator of lexical gender or may at least be used as such. This view is corroborated by the fact that gender changing affixes are specified for one grammatical gender in the lexicon, e.g. German *-in* for the feminine.

(Doleschal 2015: 1165)

This constellation was already created in PIE (see above). After an impending breakdown of the PIE gender organisation structure through phonological attrition, and consequently a no longer transparent morphological system, gender became reorganised in German, and the main steering factor was sex.

Developments in German help explain empirical findings on gendered languages,⁴⁰ namely, that in such languages (like German) masculine PNs are generally not interpreted generically but rather sex-specific. Some researchers (cf. among others Boroditsky et al. 2003; Segel & Boroditsky 2011; Sato et al. 2016, 2017; Hajnal & Zipser 2017; Gygax et al. 2021) have therefore called attention to Dan Slobin's (1987; 1996) concept of *thinking for speaking*:

Whatever else language may do in human thought and action, it surely directs us to *attend* – while speaking – to the dimensions of experience that are enshrined in grammatical categories.

(Slobin 1996: 71)

In other words the semantic category 'sex' is encoded in German grammar, it is even the semantic core of the gender-assignment system. This means that speakers automatically pay attention to this semantic feature when "using" the grammatical category gender in language.

⁴⁰The term 'gendered' points to the existence of a masculine and feminine gender over which the male and female sexes are spread, i.e., a sex-based gender system (cf. Corbett 1991).

Even if sex may not be relevant to or redundant in a given context, the grammatical category of gender triggers sex interpretations. This explains why the use of feminisation seems to be more robust than in Dutch, and why the spread of masculine and feminine nouns over the semantic features [+male] and [+female], respectively, appears to be more absolute.

In sum, resemanticisation of gender entails that genders are very strongly associated with sex because they correlate with it, but only at the top of the Animacy Hierarchy. As a rule with only a few exceptions (hybrid nouns and epicenes), non-feminised human nouns whose sex is not lexically determined (e.g., *Mutter* ‘mother’) all belong to the masculine gender. Because PNs denote human beings, and therefore they are situated at the highest end of the Animacy Hierarchy, the masculine grammatical gender in this context evokes a male reading. By implication, PNs are feminised and thus migrate to the feminine grammatical class, when female reference is being made. The following section deals with the implications this crosslinguistic difference has for the grammatical status of feminisation in both languages.

3.2 Feminisation between word formation and inflection

The pervasiveness and the assumed consistency of the German feminisation system have provoked thought on its grammatical status. Some examples from German in the previous chapter demonstrated that speakers tend to feminise not only the “usual suspects” (i.e., masculine PNs with human referents), but that there are also instances of feminisation in inanimate contexts and on inanimate nouns. That the suffix *-in* has stretched to contexts in which it refers to an inanimate entity⁴¹ has led to its interpretation as a marker of formal gender agreement (Wellmann 1975: 108; Müller 1993: 340; more moderately Scott 2009b). It thereby shifts toward an inflectional status. Inflection is defined by Marzi et al. (2020: 228) as “the morphological marking of morphosyntactic and morphosemantic information like case, number, person, tense and aspect (among others) on words.” Like Booij (1993), they divide inflection into a morphosyntactically determined category, reflected syntactically in agreement, and a morphosemantically determined category, containing features that are “not

⁴¹Recall the example in Section 2.3.1, where the inanimate noun *die SPD* ‘the SPD (party)’ is the controller to the feminised PN *Befürworterin* ‘proponent.F’.

required by a syntactic context, and their choice is primarily motivated semantically” (Marzi et al. 2020: 229). These two categories are termed contextual and inherent inflection, respectively, by Booij (1993):

Inherent inflection expresses, like derivation, a certain amount of independent information, whereas the information expressed by contextual inflection is redundant, and only reflects certain aspects of the syntactic structure of the sentence.

(Booij 1993: 30)

Thus, a typical Germanic example of contextual inflection is gender (“genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behaviour of associated words”: Hockett 1958: 231), and when feminisation by *-in* is analysed as a formal gender marker (e.g., in *die Stadt ist die Eigentümerin* ‘the city.FEM is the owner.F’), it is thus analysed as an instance of contextual inflection as well. The presumed reason is that it cannot be semantically motivated here, because its function is not the marking of female sex on a PN. Other categories, like number, are morphosemantically determined, and therefore fall into the inherent-inflection class.⁴² The status of Dutch feminising morphology as mostly derivational processes with varying degrees of productivity (cf. Section 3.2.2) is undisputed in the literature (cf. among others van Santen & de Vries 1981; van Marle 1984: 8.3.3; van Santen 1992: Chapter 6; van Santen 2003; de Caluwe & van Santen 2001). In other words, these are similar processes in both languages in that they share the same semantics and nominal hosts, but whose grammatical status can be analysed differently. Indeed, it is possible that “one and the same category may be inflectional in one language and derivational in another” (Štekauer 2015: 220). The German analysis is especially anchored in the gray zone, the interface between inflection and word formation. By way of introduction to this subject, the following adage from Haspelmath counts here:

⁴²The status of a grammatical category may vary crosslinguistically: German case is regarded as an instance of contextual inflection, while Latin case, for example, is considered as inherent inflection (Marzi et al. 2020: 229-230).

The inflection/derivation distinction is not absolute but allows for gradience and fuzzy boundaries [...], we are dealing with a continuum from clear inflection to clear derivation with ambiguous cases in between.

(Haspelmath 1996: 47)

This citation highlights the fact that there are points of contact between the domains.⁴³ Moreover, it goes against formal theories that emphasise the notion of Split Morphology (Anderson 1982; Perlmutter 1988), which stands for the “hypothesis that derivation and inflection are separated in the grammar” (Booij 1993: 27), i.e., are governed by a separate set of rules. With arguments that will be outlined in the next paragraphs, the fuzzy-boundaries perspective on the inflection/derivation interface will be adopted here. Gender morphology in Dutch and German finds itself on the continuum proposed by Haspelmath, and can assume different positions crosslinguistically and diachronically. It can be more of a derivational or more of an inflectional nature, and shifts therein can take place over time. A shift toward the inflectional end of the scale might be classified as a case of grammaticalisation (Leiss 2005). In fact, Leiss (ibid.) sees derivation as a transitioning station of nominal suffixes toward grammaticalisation. The opposite direction, lexicalisation as “the production of neologisms”, creating “new entries in the inventory” (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 60), is also conceivable. English provides a very suitable example for the movement of feminisation morphology toward a status with opaque remnants in lexicalised forms. For example, the form *vixen* contains a former feminising suffix *-en* (the English cognate of German and Dutch *-in*), which, indebted to lexicalisation, has become opaque as a morpheme and has fused with its root. The pattern *-in* has now zero productivity in English and only occurs in lexicalised units. The female semantics, however, are still part of its core as one lexical morpheme.

The question then arises: which characteristics and developments constitute a shift toward the inflectional or lexical end of the scale? It is inherent inflection that contains

⁴³The similarities between derivation and inflection have caused studies on grammatical categories to focus on elements that find themselves in between. Some examples are Zwanenburg 1995 for French adverbs; van Santen 2001 for the Dutch plural; Manova 2002 for aspect and gender in some Slavic languages.

and less likely to be obligatory.

(Brinton & Traugott 2005: 87)

Hence, both inflectional and derivational affixes involve fusion. Not only diachronically but also synchronically, derivation is situated between inflection and lexicalisation on the level of boundedness (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994: 41).

The position of an element on the lexical-grammatical scale can only be determined in terms of prototypicality (Dressler 1989; Haspelmath 1996). Prototypical inflection is contextual inflection, because elements on this pole are maximally different from the elements on the lexical pole. Since derivation is a subtype of word formation, and thus contributes to the lexicon by coining new entries for it, prototypical derivation has lexical characteristics. In the following, some criteria will be discussed that are typically found in studies concerned with the derivation/inflection distinction in terms of prototypicality. These characteristics are both formal and semantic in nature. The first six (3.2.1.1-3.2.1.5) are criteria that Booij (1993) uses to demonstrate the overlap between derivational and inherent inflectional morphology. To this, further criteria will be added from other sources, and each criterion will be analysed in relation to the Dutch and German feminisation systems, so that a contrastive synchronic analysis is the result (with an overview in Table 3.1 in the following section).

3.2.1 Inherent inflection and derivation: overlapping phenomena

3.2.1.1 Relevance and affix distribution A first phenomenon that inherent inflection and derivation have in common is accounted for by the already discussed notion of relevance, namely affix distribution (Booij 1993: 35). Relevance combines form and function in that a “meaning element is relevant to another meaning element if the semantic content of the first directly affects or modifies the semantic content of the second” (Bybee 1985: 13). Form reflects categorial relevance: the more the semantic content of element A modifies the semantic content of element B, the more the form of A affects the form of B. This semantic modification of A is what sets inherent inflection apart from contextual inflection and what causes a similarity with lexical items and hence, derivation. As a consequence of this

semantic modification, the proximity of B to A is guaranteed by affix ordering: affixes will typically be attached directly to their bases, rather than further away from them (Štekauer 2015: 228).⁴⁴ Bybee’s (1985: 12) relevance cline is displayed here again, in Fig. 3.3, this time by placing German and Dutch nominal categories on the scale. The original elaboration of the scale that includes German nominal categories stems from Nübling et al. (2017: 89). The authors place feminisation at the lexical/derivational interface. The added striped arrow represents its extension onto the derivational/inflectional interface.

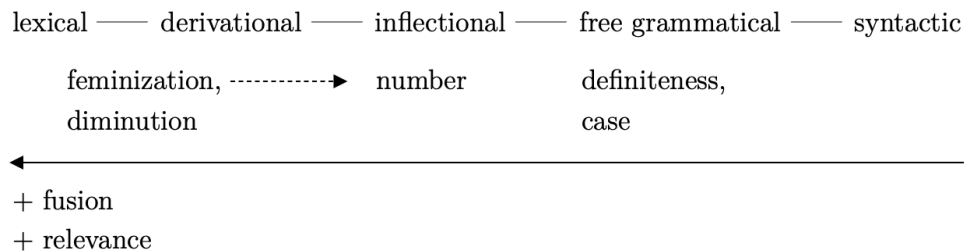


Figure 3.3: Relevance and fusion cline of grammatical nominal categories in German and Dutch, (adapted from Nübling et al. 2017: 89).

Consider for instance the category case in German, compared to feminisation. The semantic content of the nominative base is not modified by accusative case (*der.NOM Franzose.NOM* – *den.ACC Franzosen.ACC* ‘the Frenchman’). Case marking solely serves the sentential role of the referent as an agent or patient (Nübling et al. 2017: 69). Feminisation, on the other hand, changes the semantic content of the base by changing the referent’s gender. Like number, feminisation affects “the inherent qualities of the entity [...] being referred to” (Bybee 1985: 85), and this to Booij (1993) is typical of inherent inflection and derivation.⁴⁵ In the case of *der.MASC Franzose.¬F* (‘the Frenchman’) → *die.FEM Französin.F* (‘the French woman’), the aforementioned semantic modification is reflected in the formal modification of the base by means of the suffix *-in*, which in turn may trigger umlaut. The unlauted vowel /ø/ in *Französin* ‘French woman’ could not occur if the *in*-suffix did not directly

⁴⁴This is Greenberg’s (1963: 95) Universal 39.

⁴⁵Relevance is not only a descriptive notion, it is also explanatory of diachronic developments. Diachronically, number has been morphologically strengthened in German and Dutch, with a clear singular/plural morphological opposition, expressed on the noun itself. Within relevance theory, thus, number can be analysed as more relevant than case, which in turn has undergone a morphological weakening process (Dammel, Kürschner & Nübling 2010: 617; Nübling 2008: 302; Nübling et al. 2017: 66).

attach to the base. The base modification by umlaut is not a rule and allows for variation: *Kunde* → *Kundin*/**Kündin* ‘client’, *Flame* → *Flamin*/*Flämin* ‘Flemish (wo)man’. Note that *-in* substitutes the ending *-e* in *Franzose* ‘Frenchman’ → *Französin* ‘French woman’, too. This suffix substitution, however, does not always occur and is restricted to weak masculines ending in *-e*. Feminised PNs are suffixed nouns, whereby a masculine suffix such as *-er*, *-ent*, *-ist* etc. precedes feminising *-in*. Even closer to the base than *-in* is the most productive Dutch feminising suffix, *-ster* (cf. Section 5.2.1). The suffix derives agentive nouns from non-nominal bases. Instead of being added to a masculine nominal stem, it substitutes it: *schrijf*- ‘write’ → *schrijv-er* ‘writer.¬F’ vs. *schrijf-ster* ‘writer.F’. More precisely, PNs ending in *-ster* are derived directly from a verb, adjective, or other word type (e.g., *verslaggeefster* ‘reporter.F’ from *verslaggeven.V* ‘to report’, *vrijwilligster* ‘volunteer.F’ from *vrijwillig* ‘voluntary.ADJ’, cf. Section 5.2.1.1). Thereby *-ster* adopts a typical property of derivation, namely that derivational affixes change the word class of the derived form (cf. below). This is not a property of typical grammatical items and it constitutes a crucial difference between Dutch and German feminisation. On another note on the semantics of feminisation, it can be said that feminisation morphology has semantically widened its scope diachronically. The suffix *-in* was in use in German as an onymic marker (as a patronym with the meaning ‘daughter of X’ and as a matronym with the meaning ‘wife of X’) from the rise of family names in the 13th century until well into the 18th century (Schmuck 2017: 34), when the system was rapidly dismantled (cf. also Section 5.3.1). The rise and downfall of onymic *-in* took place simultaneously in Dutch (Mooijaart 1991: 199). This loss of semantic specification paved the path for its context expansion, at least in German (for Dutch, cf. Section 5.2.1). In terms of relevance, thus, it can be said that on the semantic level the feminising morpheme affects its base equally in Dutch and German, but only if the base is a non-feminised noun. Feminisation changes the semantics of the base from [+male] to [+female], or it adds the feature [+female] to a base. When the base is not a noun, which can only happen in Dutch, then the semantic modification is more profound, because not only is the base feminised, it is also made [+human] (e.g., *schrijf*- ‘write.V’ as nonhuman →

schrijf-ster ‘writer.F’ as human and female). Relevance is in turn reflected in the proximity of the feminising element to the base. German feminisation of a masculine noun thus affects its base somewhat less, both semantically and formally.

3.2.1.2 Lexicalisation and inflectional split Lexicalisation has already been introduced as a possible outcome for word forms containing derivational material. Booij (1993: 34-35) points out that lexicalisation is also a possible outcome for inherent inflection. Participles and infinitives, for instance, can be subject to lexicalisation, e.g., *woedend/wütend* ‘furious, lit. raging’ as a former present participle that lexicalised into an adjective (ibid.). Inflectional split points to the fact that “inflectionally related word forms receive different interpretations” (Booij 1993: 32), for example, plural forms with different semantics from their singular bases, as in Dutch *letter* ‘letter’ → *letteren* ‘literature, arts’ (ibid.). Inflectional split and lexicalisation are closely related, because the former implies the latter. Van Marle (1984: 277) notes that lexicalised items are forms which “display properties of either a formal or a semantic nature that can not be predicted by general rule.” Accordingly, lexicalised forms reveal some sort of idiosyncrasy (caused by the inflectional split), which transparently derived nouns do not possess. This is certainly true of many English feminised forms (*vixen* ‘originally: fox.F’, *mistress*, *spinster*, with pejorative or sexualised connotations). In Dutch there are nouns with similar tendencies as well. With regard to feminisation, there are some examples that involve a process resembling an inflectional split. A well-known example is *secretaresse/Sekretärin* ‘secretary.F’ to *secretaris/Sekretär* ‘secretary.¬F’, where the former, at least in Dutch, has left its original domain of ‘clerk at a ministry’ to ‘assistant, typist, receptionist in an office or institution’.⁴⁶ This second meaning is also true of German *Sekretärin*, although it is widely used as a feminised form in the original semantic context as well (e.g., *Staatssekretärin* ‘secretary.F of state’). Other Dutch examples are *directrice* ‘director.F’ but also ‘headmistress’, and *ambassadrice* ‘ambassador.F’ but also ‘wife of the

⁴⁶Anecdotally, the Belgian Secretary of State for Gender Equality, Sarah Schlitz, was addressed by her colleague Alexia Bertrand as *staatssecretaresse* ‘secretary of state.F’. This was such a marked use of the form that it was widely noted and discussed in Belgian media and on X (formerly Twitter). In the Flemish newspaper *De Standaard*, the question was put forward if this use of *secretaresse* was particularly sexist (“Zeg je mevrouw de directeur of mevrouw de directrice?”, *De Standaard*, 9 July, 2021).

ambassador’ (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 59), especially in the Netherlands. There is the derogatory *boerin* ‘farmer.F, peasant.F’ in its use for badly-mannered or sloppy women, or *leeuwin* ‘lioness’ as a name for a fierce woman. While such idiosyncratic semantic features also exist in German, the feminised form is nevertheless mostly used as the feminised version of the noun with the semantics of the masculine. In Dutch, to avoid such semantics, which are often negatively connoted, the non-feminised form is mostly used in reference to women as well. Some feminised nouns are thus more strongly lexicalised in Dutch than in German.

3.2.1.3 Agreement “[A]greement w.r.t. inherent morphosyntactic categories is more of a semantic nature than agreement with respect to contextually determined, semantically empty, properties” (Booij 1993: 36). Semantic agreement was discussed in Section 2.3, and it was made clear that feminisation is an instance of semantic gender marking on the basis of the referent’s sex. The semantic weight of inherent inflectional features link them with derivation. This is true of Dutch and German feminisation alike.

3.2.1.4 Lacking forms While contextual inflection occurs in complete paradigms (e.g., the category person is relevant in every inflected verb), inherent inflection shares with derivational patterns that paradigms may be incomplete (Booij 1993: 31). This is certainly true of Dutch, as was demonstrated before. Nouns such as *ingenieur* ‘engineer.¬F’ and *professor* ‘professor.¬F’ are not found as feminised forms. The German feminisation paradigm has some gaps as well, although these are systematically filled. Kopf (2022) discusses anglicisms in *-er* (*Manager*, *Babysitter*), for instance, which rapidly adapt to the German feminisation system. In terms of lacking forms, thus, German behaves more inflection-like than Dutch in that newcomers to the class of PNs are adapted to the feminisation system, whereas this is not the case for Dutch. The greater gaps that Dutch leaves in its feminisation system are typical of derivation.

3.2.1.5 Deflection The last phenomenon that Booij discusses is the restoration of inherent inflectional features that became lost in a process of deflection (Booij 1993: 32-34).

In both Dutch and German, the number category (inherent inflection) was restored at the expense of case (contextual inflection) after an original process of deflection (Marynissen 1996; Nübling et al. 2017: 64-72). Likewise, the ending *-in* was restored after its incipient atrophy in OHG and OD. The weakening of German *-in* is attested in OHG (e.g., in Notker⁴⁷ we find the weakened form *guten* ‘goddess’). Instead of being lost it was restrengthened by reanalysis of the oblique case ending *-inna* (*gutinna* ‘goddess’) as the new nominative form. *-inna* was then again weakened to *-in*: *-inna* > *-inne* > *-in* (Frings 1932: 34f.). MHD *-inne* is an attenuated accusative as well (Mooijaart 1991: 199). Both *-in* and *-ster* are Germanic suffixes, and both have survived all impeding attenuation and reduction processes. Notwithstanding their “survival” in Dutch to date, most feminisation patterns have been subject to stagnating productivity without diachronic restoration – which is also linked with their occurrences in lexicalised items. Productivity and loss of feminisation patterns will be the point of focus in Chapter 5 (for productivity of Dutch feminisation patterns in particular, cf. Section 5.2.1). German *-in* thus behaves more inflection-like than Dutch feminisation patterns, specifically *-in*.

3.2.1.6 Transparency Prototypically, inflectional categories display a one-to-one relation of form and meaning, and are therefore more transparent than derivational categories. In this sense, noun feminisation by means of suffixation is more transparent in German than in Dutch: German has only one very productive suffix *-in*, and a few other, almost negligible feminising suffixes to which it poses a competitive threat (cf. Section 5.3.1): *-euse*, e.g. *Friseuse* vs. *Friseurin* ‘hairdresser.F’, *Masseuse* vs. *Masseurin* ‘massage therapist.F’; *-esse*, e.g. *Maitresse* ‘mistress’. These are non-native suffixes that only exist as part of the loan words in which they occur. Dutch, by contrast, has a range of different, mostly complementarily distributed, but occasionally competing suffixes (e.g., *bak-ster*, *bakker-es*, *bakker-in* ‘baker.F’). A comparable lack of transparency is also found in the inherent inflectional category number. The German plural is known for its allomorphy and the Dutch

⁴⁷Cf. for instance Notker, *Boethius* II, 45, 1; *Martianus Capella* I, 3, 11; 5,5; 38, 11; II, 146, 13. In *Mart.Cap.* II, 147, 7 Notker also uses the non weakened form *gutin*.

plural for its variation between *-s* and *-en* in certain contexts, e.g., in *dienaar-s* vs. *dienar-en* ‘servants.→F’. Here, suffix competition is thus found as well. With respect to transparency, German feminisation behaves more inflection-like than Dutch feminisation.

3.2.1.7 Phonological weight Apart from competition between affixes, another property of prototypical derivational affixes is their relatively complex phonological and prosodic structure compared to inflectional affixes. Indeed, feminising suffixes are only partly phonologically short or weak (*-e*, *-es*), and sometimes even bisyllabic, e.g. Dutch *-esse*, *-erse*, *-egge*, with syllabically complex but attenuated *-ster* in between. German *-in* is phonologically salient in that it contains a full vowel but it is not stressed (Szczepaniak 2023: 179). The above described suffix-reinforcement process accounts for the conservation of /ɪ/ in *-in*. Since the weakened ending *-en* is well represented as a plural and weak case suffix in German, the preservation of *-en* as a feminising suffix would also have led to a considerable amount of syncretisms within declension classes. Whereas German *-in* is phonologically attenuated, many Dutch feminising suffixes are not. Apart from *-e*, *-es*, *-ster*, which are phonologically weak, Dutch has quite a few feminising suffixes which are bisyllabic and/or even stressed (*secretarESse* ‘secretary.F’, *dievEGge* ‘thief.F’, *bakkERse* ‘baker.F’, *vriendIN* ‘friend.F’). Nevertheless, none of these suffixes are active in MoD. The reinforcement of phonologically reduced forms is contrary to typical grammaticalisation clines. Phonological complexity or fullness are characteristic of lexical items.

3.2.1.8 Syntactic obligatoriness The syntactic function of morphemes is a criterion for the inflection/derivation distinction in that “prototypically, inflection is affected by syntax while derivation affects syntax” (Štekauer 2015: 222; cf. also Booij 2006: 655f.). Hence, prototypical inflectional morphemes “are those which are required by the syntax of the sentence” (Bybee 1985: 81). Derivation can change word class (although this is not required, cf. *kopen/kaufen* ‘buy.V’ → *ver-kopen/ver-kaufen* ‘sell.V’), and in doing so affects syntax. The Dutch feminising suffix *-ster* is a word-class changer: it attaches to non-nominal items and forms agentive [+female] nouns from them (*loop-* ‘run’ → *loop-ster* ‘runner.F’). Other

feminising morphology does not change word class, e.g., German *-in* (*Läufer* ‘runner.¬F’ → *Läufer-in* ‘runner.F’), which needs a masculine nominal base to attach to. Given that German feminisation is rooted in the feminine gender class, and non-feminised forms in the masculine gender class, syntax is relevant here (32b). For Dutch, that is not the case, because feminised and non-feminised PNs both belong to the *utrum* gender class (32a).

- (32) a. De vermoeide [**kapster** → **kapper**] rijdt met de
 the.UTR tired.UTR hairdresser.UTR.F → hairdresser.UTR.¬F drives with the
 auto naar huis.
 car to home
- b. Die ermüdete [**Friseurin** → ***Friseur**] fährt mit dem Auto nach
 the.FEM tired.FEM hairdresser.F → *hairdresser.¬F drives with the car to
 Hause.
 home
 ‘The tired hairdresser drives home by car.’

German syntax does not allow for *Friseur* as a substitute for *Friseurin*, because the construction requires syntactic agreement on the nominal phrase, which the change in grammatical gender violates. This change in grammatical gender is in turn triggered by the *in*-suffix: “gender changing affixes are specified for one grammatical gender in the lexicon” (Doleschal 2015: 1165). As discussed in Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, the grammatical M/F gender distinction and feminisation are closely related, because the animate pole of the gender system has sex as its semantic core. Hence, all feminised items are grammatically feminine. Gender itself is only reflected “in the behaviour of associated words” (Hockett 1958: 231), which is a typical characteristic of contextual inflection. The idea that feminisation is required by syntax in examples such as *die Stadt ist Eigentümerin* ‘the city.FEM is the owner.F’ suggests an analysis as an instance of contextual inflection. Based on other points discussed here, and on the analyses of feminisation in Chapters 6 and 7, this idea will be argued against. This paragraph can thus be summarised as follows: German feminisation does not affect word class, whereas Dutch feminisation can. Although German feminisation is not required by syntax as a formal gender marker – it is not part of the gender system itself – it is embedded in the syntactic gender system in that it is specified for one gender, the feminine.

3.2.1.9 Semantic obligatoriness Obligatory are morphemes which, in a given semantic context, always takes a certain form. Put differently, “[o]bligatory categories force certain choices upon the speaker” (Bybee 1985: 81). Accordingly, these categories contain features that, like derivational elements, constitute complex words, but these complex words are unlikely to be “replaceable in context with morphologically simpler words” (Bauer 2004: 288). With regard to inflection, Bybee (1985: 81) calls obligatoriness “the most successful criterion”, although this, too, is not absolute (Lehmann 2015: 14). As an example, nearly every noun can be pluralised, and, because number is an inherent inflection category, some exceptions exist, e.g., *benzine/Benzin* ‘gasoline’ or *zand/Sand* ‘sand’, and thus obligatoriness of number marking is not absolute. Obligatoriness of feminisation is thus the obligatory marking of female sex on a PN in every [+female] context, instead of replacing it with a non-feminised alternative. To gauge obligatoriness of feminisation in Dutch and German in a way that goes beyond an intuitive assessment, the case studies in Chapters 5-7 are concerned with this question. The requirement for obligatory morpheme marking is that (nearly) all PNs participate in the process of feminisation, so that obligatory marking is actually possible. As discussed before, Dutch clearly leaves many gaps in its feminisation system, while these gaps tend to be filled more consistently in German. Although feminisation is thus an option in both languages, it is being used in different ways. The expansion of feminisation onto each (new) word of the PN category (e.g., anglicisms, as investigated by Kopf 2022, or formerly inanimates such as *Vorstand* ‘board (member)’) is measured by its productivity. Hence, with regards to this “most successful” criterion of contextual obligatoriness, two characteristics are to be investigated empirically: first, the productivity of feminisation patterns, i.e., how effectively they are used to saturate the feminisable market (cf. Chapter 5); second, how frequently language users make use of these newly coined words (cf. Chapters 6 and 7). Before turning to the notion of productivity in following section, the criteria that were introduced and discussed here are listed together in Table 3.1 for an overview of prototypical tendencies in Dutch and German. It is demonstrated that German feminisation ticks all the boxes of inherent inflection, i.e., an inflectional property that shares characteristics with

derivation.

	TENDENCY IN GERMAN	TENDENCY IN DUTCH
Relevance Semantic modification	inherent inflection feminising function	derivation feminising function humanising function
Formal modification	inherent inflection base allomorphy rare	derivation often base allomorphy and suffix substitution
Affix distribution	inherent inflection after masculine morphology, e.g., after <i>-er</i>	derivation does not need masculine morphology, e.g., substi- tutes <i>-er</i>
Phonological structure	inherent inflection monosyllabic, unstressed	derivation monosyllabic, bisyllabic, stressed, or fully attenuated
Transparency	inherent inflection one productive morpheme <i>-in</i> (cf. Chapter 5)	derivation allomorphy (cf. Chapter 5)
Lexicalisation	inherent inflection feminisation in spite of id- iosyncratic semantic fea- tures	derivation if idiosyncratic features, then no feminisation
Lacking forms	inherent inflection gaps rapidly filled	derivation many non-filled gaps
Affix revival	inherent inflection historical restoration of <i>-in</i> , consistent productivity	derivation stagnating productivity of feminisation patterns
Obligatoriness Syntactic obligatoriness	inherent inflection existence motivated by the gender system	derivation changes word class
Semantic obligatoriness	inherent inflection tendency to fill gaps, consis- tent use (cf. Chapters 6 and 7)	derivation many gaps, very inconsis- tent use (cf. Chapters 6 and 7)

Table 3.1: Grammatical status of feminisation in German and Dutch. Comparison of various criteria.

3.2.2 Productivity and analogy: definition, contextualisation, methods

Morphological productivity is a complex notion and widely discussed, especially regarding its quantification and measurement. “[C]ategories with growing membership” are productive and, vice versa, “categories with fixed or declining membership” are unproductive (Baayen 2009: 900). The goal of productive patterns is to “saturate [an] onomasiological market” (ibid.: 906), i.e., to expand onto all conceivable members of a class. Productivity itself is, at least in functionalist approaches, considered to be another graded phenomenon (cf. van Santen 1992: 91-130), which has gained ground in morphological theory in recent decades (cf. Hay & Baayen 2005). Whereas formal-generativist approaches of morphological productivity mostly circle around the notion of possibility, more recent, functional approaches speak in terms of probability and gradedness (cf. Baayen 2009). Possibility refers to all the possible complex words that can be the outcome of some productive morphological rule: “it thus remains the task of morphology to tell us what sort of new words a speaker *can* form” (Aronoff 1976: 19, italics N.V.). The possible outcome is thus pre-defined, because it is rule-based and competence-bound. Probability, on the other hand, assumes a more gradient outlook on morphological productivity, which is situated in language performance and is dependent not only on language-internal factors, but also on pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors:

Morphological productivity can be understood as resulting from a great many factors such as the individual language user’s experience with the words of her language, her phenomenal memory capacities, her conversational skills, her command of the stylistics registers available in her language community, her knowledge of other languages, her communicative needs, her personal language habits and those of people with which she interacts.

(Baayen 2009: 901)

In a usage-based (emergent) grammar, a morphological rule is not understood as either being productive or being unproductive, but rather as more or less probable to appear in

performance (Baayen 2009: 900f.). With arguments that will be introduced below, the view adopted here will be one stressing “the central role of gradedness in morphology, [which] casts doubt on the usefulness of an absolute distinction between productive and unproductive rules” (Baayen 2009: 901), or, an “either/or choice” (Bauer 1983: 99). In sum, the probabilistic view on productivity is mirrored in the following definition (which takes a different perspective from the working definition proposed further below): “productivity is the extent to which a pattern is *likely* to apply to new forms (e.g., borrowed items or novel formations)” (Bybee 2001: 12f., italics N.V.).

In this context of probability and gradience it is appropriate to also adopt the notion of analogy, which in a usage-based grammar substitutes the concept of absolute (or true) morphological rules (Baayen 2009: 900). If there are no true morphological rules which in turn lead to productive morphological patterns, word formation happens through analogical examples sharing characteristics with the newly formed complex word that can be found in grammar (phonological, morphological characteristics), or that are semantic or stylistic in nature. A Dutch feminine counterpart of a non-feminised form ending in *-ling*, for example, will end in *-linge*, but never in **-lingster* or **-lingin*, and the feminising suffixes *-es* and *-in* seem less favourable than *-ster* to the masculine *bakker* ‘baker.–F’.⁴⁸ Hüning (2010) deems the probabilistic approach to morphological productivity very suitable in modeling language change. In this perspective, there is no morphological rule to which a complex word could apply and hence, there is no ‘ungrammaticality’:

In principe is alles mogelijk waarvoor de taalgebruiker een analogie vindt in het taalgebruik, maar niet alles is even waarschijnlijk. De hele morfologie wordt daarmee op een schaal geplaatst van ‘extreem onwaarschijnlijke’ naar ‘zeer waarschijnlijk’ (nieuw)vorming, waarbij de waarschijnlijkheid wordt bepaald door

⁴⁸For example, nlTenTen20 contains 60 instances of *bakkerin* ‘baker.F’, compared to one instance of *bakkeres* ‘baker.F’. The more common form is *bakster* ‘baker.F’, with 208 hits (also a rather low absolute number).

formele, semantische, pragmatische, stilistische of sociolinguïstische factoren.⁴⁹

(Hüning 2010: 63)

Thus, in view of feminisation as a melting pot of various intra- and extralinguistic influences and preferences (gender, pragmatics, social factors), it seems suitable to adopt a usage-based approach on productivity when measuring, diachronically and synchronically, the productivity of feminising suffixes in Dutch. Analogy is all-encompassing, and it is the reason why every utterance is prone to language change:

The same mechanism that produces language produces language change. Speakers invoke analogy every time they produce language, so the potential for creating new forms is present with every utterance.

(Chapman & Skousen 2005: 340)

Applied to feminisation, as discussed in the previous chapter, analogy-driven expansion of feminising morphology can be dependent on the pragmatic factor of referentiality. In a highly referential context, feminisation is more likely or probable to occur, although its occurrence in such contexts may analogically advance expansion of feminisation there. This occurrence, in turn, can be motivated by other situational factors. For example, feminisation has strong social connotations in German as both a marker of identity and a way of countering sexist language use. By contrast, its non-use has a strong social connotation in Dutch, which may impede its analogical spread. Such influences on feminisation are discussed in Chapter 4. The role of register and text genre, as well as the diatopic perspective and formal restrictions on the productivity of feminisation will be explored in Chapter 5. Drawing from Gestalt psychology and visual pattern recognition, Fischer (2021: 324) finds that “we recognize patterns even in the most difficult circumstances, when constrained to do so.”

⁴⁹“In principle, everything for which the language user can find an analogy is possible, but not everything is equally probable. The whole notion of morphology is then placed on a scale, ranging from ‘extremely improbable’ to ‘extremely probable’ formation, whereby the probability is determined by formal, semantic, pragmatic, stylistic or sociolinguistic factors.” [N.V.]

Methodologically, usage-based approaches to productivity prefer, and imply, the help of a corpus. Hopper (1987: 68) states that “the advent of corpus linguistic has further deepened our understanding of language as frequency-based.” Frequency is a common notion related to usage-based methodology, because in a functionalist framework, grammar is emergent in discourse (cf. Hopper 1987). This entails that grammar, or “linguistic materialisation” (Motschenbacher 2016: 67), is the (ever-emerging) result of “continual citation and re-citation” (ibid.), put differently: frequency of use. This frequency-oriented study of linguistic material is rooted in the idea that “token”-interdiscursivity is analogically extended onto “type”-interdiscursivity (Silverstein 2005: 9). Concretely, the former points to a “discursive event”, while the latter is “an internalised notion of a type or genre of discursive event” (Silverstein 2005: ibid.). This type-interdiscursivity is essentially Silverstein’s discourse-oriented paraphrasing of how analogy functions, namely, as the application of an internalised pattern (type) to a new context. The pattern in question arose from repeated, similarly contextualised uses as a token. As early as 1880, Hermann Paul emphasised the role of frequency and/in analogy: “Denn zum Wesen des Prozesses gehört es ja eben, dass er durch wiederholte gleichmässige Anwendung der anfänglich nur okkasionellen Bedeutung zu Stande kommt”⁵⁰ (Paul 1880: 84). The process in question for Paul is semantic change, and here frequency-based analogy (cf. Paul 1880: Chapter 5 ‘Analogie’) plays the leading role. With respect to feminisation, Motschenbacher (2016: 67) notes that semantic developments in PNs (for example, the exclusively male semantics of non-feminised nouns or their lack of a female reading) can be steered by repeated, i.e., frequent, use (for example, frequent use of feminised PNs instead of generically intended non-feminised PNs in non-male contexts). Quantitative approaches to corpus linguistics offer insight into token and type frequencies.

So, how can productivity degrees be appropriately quantified? To gauge the productivity degree as-is in a corpus that represents different levels (registers) of language use, and that is wide enough to be somewhat representative, the number of existing complex words within a morphological category is relevant. In the case of feminine PNs, a complex word refers

⁵⁰“Because it lies in the nature of the process that it comes into being through consistent use of the meaning, which at the beginning is still occasional.” [NV].

to a feminised, suffixed PN as a type. Thus, to measure the realised productivity of a morphological pattern, one must simply count the types formed by that pattern. As will be shown below, “productive categories are characterised by the presence of large numbers of low-frequency forms” (Baayen 2009: 904), i.e., high numbers of types, each corresponding to a low number of tokens. The number of existing complex words within a morphological category is relevant in this case, because they indicate the probability of newly coined words (van Santen 1992: 95). Types with a high token frequency, often irregular forms, are less prone to language change: for example, strong verbs have a low type frequency but a high token frequency. Forms with a low type frequency are less likely to attract new members to their class (Nübling et al. 2017: 78). Therefore, the probability of a new word formed by means of an affix with a low type frequency, is low. The lower the probability of a new word being formed, the lower the degree of productivity (cf. Bybee 2001).

When comparing different categories, a simple comparison of type counts will not suffice to assess the productivity of both categories (cf. Baayen 2009, who demonstrates the flaws of a simple type count when comparing *-ster* as a suffix denoting female agents, and *ver-*, a verb-forming prefix). Two other ways of gauging the productivity of a certain morphological pattern are further discussed by Baayen (2009), namely expanding productivity and potential productivity. Both measures underline the importance of hapax legomena (word forms that occur only once in a corpus). The first, expanding productivity, can be summarised as “the relative rate at which a category is expanding,” (Baayen 2009: 905) “by attracting new members” (Illoaia 2020: 51). The latter, potential productivity, refers to the end-point of productivity, i.e. the point at which “an affix has saturated the onomasiological market” (Baayen 2009: 906), which then ends its potential of further expanding. The onomasiological market for feminised PNs is defined by the entirety of non-feminised PNs it contains.

As stated above, the approach to productivity adopted here is usage-based and probability-oriented. In line with the common conception of productive categories as those “with growing membership” (Baayen 2009: 900) and its inherent gradedness, the working definition of productivity here will be the degree to which the metaphorical onomasiological market has

been saturated at a certain point in time in a certain discursive domain. Hence, productivity degrees may vary diachronically, and they may vary according to various intra- and extralinguistic factors. This basic definition of productivity is the above described realised productivity of a pattern. It implies that its expanding and potential productivity is low: if an onomasiological market is (nearly) saturated, then there is little room for further expansion. The probabilistic approach, as in Bybee's (2001: 12f.) above-mentioned definition, is more focused on the expansion of a category than on what it has already realised. The relation between productivity and analogy is reciprocal. The mechanism behind the expansion of a category onto new contexts is analogy, which heightens this category's realised productivity. In turn, the category becomes strengthened as an internalised pattern, a type in Silverstein's (2005) wordings, which advances the likelihood of further analogical expansion, again heightening realised productivity. The case studies in Chapters 6 and 7 are concerned with the notions of productivity, analogy, and frequency in the Dutch and German feminisation systems. They take various intra- and extralinguistic factors into account that contribute to stagnating or advancing productivity of feminisation patterns. The implications of high usage frequencies, active processes of analogy, and high realised productivity of feminisation are also relevant to discussions concerning their semantic markedness: in the specific case of feminisation, high productivity lowers the semantic markedness of feminised forms toward their non-feminised counterparts. This in turn is an important consideration in recent debates on the subject of generically used non-feminised forms.

3.3 Summary

The content of this chapter was twofold. First, it was demonstrated how sex and grammatical gender are related to each other from a contrastive and diachronic perspective. Studies have shown that Dutch gender has become disconnected from gender, and more so in Netherlandic Dutch than in Belgian Dutch. Due to the merger of the masculine and feminine gender classes into one common-gender (*utrum*) class, the Dutch gender system has become lightly animacy-based, with animate nouns by default pertaining to the *utrum* category (next to a

wide range of inanimate nouns). This in turn has led to the resemanticisation of the Dutch pronominal gender system (Audring 2006, 2009; De Vogelaer & De Sutter 2011; De Vos & De Vogelaer 2011; De Vogelaer et al. 2020). Whereas developments within the German gender system have also involved a process of resemanticisation (Nübling & Kempf 2020: 109), this process unfolded within the nominal gender system itself. In the domain of PNs (with a few exceptions discussed in the previous chapter), non-feminised and feminised forms are evenly spread over the masculine and feminine grammatical genders. Because grammatical gender has become so strongly associated with sex – sex being its semantic core (Corbett 2013), both nominally and pronominally – masculine and feminine PNs are apparently more regularly divided over male and female contexts, respectively. This explains why it is a prominent feature of Germanic languages that nominal gender distinctions and gender marking on PNs tend to coexist (cf. Nübling 2000: 215). The principle can be explained by the *thinking-for-speaking* theory (Slobin 1987, 1996), which describes the attention paid by speakers to certain semantic information that is encoded in a grammatical system, even on levels of language use that are independent from these semantics.

Second, building on this premise of being a sex-based language, it was demonstrated that German feminisation “ticks all the boxes” for an interpretation as an instance of inherent inflection. As opposed to Dutch, German possesses more prototypical characteristics of inflection, but is surely is no instance of prototypical, or contextual, inflection. Some criteria were discussed. A prominent notion is that of relevance, where the semantic or functional level (“feminisation as sex marking, directly affecting the inherent qualities of the entity” Bybee 1985: 85) is reflected formally (base modification). The most productive Dutch pattern, the suffix *-ster*, directly attaches to the base and substitutes the masculine agentive marker *-er*, whereas the most productive German pattern, the suffix *-in*, attaches to a masculine base and occasionally triggers umlaut. Formal modification is thus somewhat stronger in Dutch, which points to prototypical lexicality. Lexicalisation and idiosyncrasy occurs in both Dutch and German feminised forms, although only in Dutch does this lead to the avoidance of the lexicalised feminised form in its regular meaning ‘female X’. In the context of obliga-

toriness, the German feminisation system is all-encompassing in that new items are nearly always feminised, while the Dutch feminisation system displays many gaps. Here, too, German feminisation behaves more inflection-like. The same is true of transparency, because the Dutch feminisation system contains a wide range of more or less productive allomorphs; the German feminisation system only contains one productive pattern, *-in*. Lastly, Dutch, but not German, feminisation affects syntax (*-ster* derives PNs from non-nominal bases, *-in* needs a nominal masculine base). In turn, German feminisation is relevant to syntactic construction and triggers feminine agreement on adnominal elements. This agreement phenomenon is of a formal nature and the only one that is typical of contextual inflection.

Many of the criteria discussed above are preliminary; whether they are merely superficial observations or actually part of a wider system will have to be empirically investigated. Therefore, a usage-based perspective on productivity, entailing the notion of analogy will be adopted. These were introduced in this chapter, and it was demonstrated that within a functional, usage-based context of emergent grammar, frequency plays a crucial role, which in turn implies the use of corpora as an investigative method. Because the study of feminisation does not only relate to systemic and pragmatic factors, but it is also the linguistic expression of a socially relevant feature (sex), the following chapter deals with the last theoretical issue, namely language policies. Language policies are relevant in the sense that they can help advance or impede feminisation, in line with the ideological view expressed in the policy. Such policies can thus actively steer the productivity of one or multiple morphological patterns. In other words: language policies steer language use, and from language use emerge patterns.

4 Feminisation and language policy

More than many other linguistic features, feminisation is directly connected with an intrinsic characteristic of about half of human beings. Hence, metalinguistic thought on the interplay between gender morphology and biological sex and its political relevance is by no means new. Known from the earliest sources in European literature and philosophy, the political dimension of sex in language has become a well-established topic of discussion. The subject was already politically charged more than two millennia ago. Anecdotally, the Greek biographer Diogenes Laertios (ca. third century CE) wrote in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (II, 16) how a joke on grammatical gender had almost cost the philosopher Stilpo of Megara (ca. third century BCE) his life. Because he had denied the status of Athena as a god, he appeared before the Areopagus, the judicial council of Athens, where he confirmed his statement. Athena was no god because *gods* (θεός) were male, he had jokingly stated. Athena was instead a *goddess* (θεα). He was sent away from the city because of this blasphemous episode (cf. also Becker 2008: 65).

Grammatical gender marking remained a relevant feature in European politics throughout the subsequent centuries. European languages share the fact that gender-marking morphology may also be used onymically (‘wife/daughter of X’, cf. Chapter 5). This onymic use is the original function of royal titles, causing some confusion in practice. On October 16, 1384, Poland’s first female monarch, Jadwiga, was crowned *king* and received the royal title *Hedivigis Dei Gracia Rex Poloniae* ‘Jadwiga, King of Poland by the Grace of God’, or, in Polish, *Król Jadwiga* ‘King Jadwiga’ (cf. Czwojdrak 2022). As the title *Regina* (and Polish *Królowa* ‘Queen’) was reserved for a queen consort only – and since there had never been a queen regent – the masculine version was the sole title referring to a *de jure* sovereign. The Polish suffix *-owa* thus served as an onymic marker, too. History repeats itself as late as 2001, when the Belgian Senate discussed the title of the country’s monarch in case a woman were to become its “king”, which had been legally possible since 1991. Senator Van Quickborne asked what to do with conventional terminology in this case, to which he received the reply:

Het behoort inderdaad tot de mogelijkheden dat we in de toekomst een vrouwelijk staatshoofd zullen krijgen. Zolang dit echter niet het geval is, is dit een semantische discussie. In ieder geval is het zo dat het begrip *Koning* inhoudelijk moet gelezen worden als ‘Staatshoofd’, weze het een man of een vrouw.⁵¹

(Belgian Senate, 11 June 2001, Bulletin nr. 2-38.)⁵²

These examples indicate the same logic that had begat the fate of Stilpo of Megara: historical sources clearly point to some doubts about the linguistic applicability of masculine forms to women. It is still a major point of discussion in debates regarding gender-fair language use today. The following pages are meant as an overview of two different views regarding which linguistic forms are considered “fair” toward women. These views are anchored in metalinguistic thought about the connection between sex and gender, and they constitute the base for diverging political views on (and politically endorsed implementations of) gender-fair language use. I will start with an overview of the historical and philosophical European context in which feminisation in both Dutch and German is embedded, before turning to diverging developments within the language areas in recent decades.

4.1 A brief history of metalinguistic thought on gender

As early as the fifth century BCE, the Greek philosopher Protagoras argued that there was a close connection between biological sex and grammar, whereas for Aristotle (fourth century BCE) the connection between the two was of a purely formal nature (Irmén & Steiger 2005: 214). Although Aristotle denied a relation between grammatical gender and biological sex, he did attribute an agent/patient distinction to the masculine (agent) and feminine (patient) genders, which was taken up again the Middle Ages (ibid.: 216). In Thomas von Erfurt’s 13th-century *Grammatica Speculativa*, for example, the association of male/female with the opposition agent/patient becomes evident (Royen 1929: 19, 24). But it is not

⁵¹“Indeed it belongs to the possibilities that we will have a female monarch in the future. As long as this is not the case, however, this is a semantic discussion. In any case, the content of the name *King* is to be regarded as the ‘head of state’, be it a man or a woman.” [N.V.]

⁵²Available online via <https://www.senate.be/> [Accessed 25-01-2023].

until after the Middle Ages that the idea of agentive masculines, purportedly reflecting the agentive and strong role of men in society, and patient feminines, equally reflecting the weaker woman's societal role, culminates. A prominent advocate of this view is Jacob Grimm. He collected linguistic data from German to prove that the masculine gender is "das lebendigste, kräftigste und ursprünglichste unter allen"⁵³ (Grimm 1890 [1831]: 309). Grimm essentially argues that any entity is perceived anthropomorphically by humans, and that therefore any lifeless object, as well as any animate entity, receives a grammatical gender, based on its perceived sex. What becomes evident in this view is what Leiss (1994) dubs "the sexualisation of grammatical gender." The rebirth of the idea that grammatical gender should be traced back to biological sex – including sex-based connotations – coincides with 18th-century anthropological views. The first mention of generic masculines is found in the context of 18th-century anthropological analysis (Irmen & Steiger 2005: 219). These are anthropologies of othering, or "Sonderanthropologien" (Leiss 1994: 294), that regard women as the "other" sex, as opposed to the naturally civilised and normative status of the male. Metalinguistic texts on gender of this time are to be understood in light of this context (Irmen & Steiger 2005: 218-219).

Karl Brugmann counts as Grimm's opponent in the assumption that grammatical gender originates from natural gender. At the turn of the 19th century, Brugmann laid out the base for a new perspective on grammatical gender, which regards it as an a priori category. He argued that biological sex and grammatical gender are separate categories that do not overlap, save for a post-hoc association of sex with gender (Brugmann 1897: 27 and cf. Section 3.1). Brugmann clarifies this post-hoc approach to sex associations by turning to the personification of concepts through gods: "To the Greeks and Romans, *ερωσ* and *amor* [love] was a boy or youth; [...] To the Germans, on the contrary, *die Minne*, *die Liebe* was a goddess, since the appellative was feminine" (Brugmann 1897: 18-19). In other words, had the concept of 'love' been regarded cognitively as male or female only, European languages would have expressed this sexualised conception of the concept more homogeneously in their respective gender systems. In light of more recent considerations in linguistics and beyond, Brugmann

⁵³"most lively, powerful, and most authentic of them all" [N.V.]

seemed to be on the right track by arguing that “Grimm’s theory is in itself psychologically improbable” (Brugmann 1897: 14): as pointed out in the previous chapter (Section 3.1.2), the late PIE and PGM gender systems were sex-based, as well as the resemantised NHG gender system. Slobin’s (1987; 1996) notion of *thinking for speaking* accounts for sex associations on various levels of cognition in such sex-based gender systems.

The Grimm-Brugmann discussion was essentially a continuation of a centuries-old debate within philosophy and linguistics that gained new and broader attention in the 20th century, under the lead of feminist movements. Feminists observed how patriarchal societal structures determined everyday life, which they also saw reflected on many domains of language (use), and pursued their deconstruction. Especially in the second half of the 20th century, the rise of feminist organisations that turned their attention to linguistic structures reflecting societal patriarchal structures became a relevant factor in contributing and steering current conceptualisations of grammatical gender and its use. Although this is a feature of most European languages,⁵⁴ Sections 4.3 and 4.4 examine and summarise discourses on sex and grammatical gender in Dutch- and German-speaking areas specifically. Different perspectives on sex and gender, associated with different language areas and ideological state structures, result in gender-fair language use strategies. Such a strategy can either be neutralisation or differentiation, and these will be discussed in the following section.

4.2 Feminisation and strategies of gender-fair language use

Neutralisation and differentiation as strategies for gender-fair language use are the exponents of opposite argumentation patterns. First, neutralisation is a strategy of *undoing gender* (Hirschauer 1994) on the linguistic level (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 17), and it is argued that in the wake of gender equality, sex differences should not be marked as relevant. Creating different terms to refer to women, terms which are deviant from their bases and

⁵⁴The term “European languages” is understood here as a common denominator for Indo-European languages which were originally, i.e., pre-colonially, spoken on the European continent. However, language reform that is linked to gender is not a European idea alone; one example is the situation in Latin-American Spanish, where gender-inclusive language is intertwined with postcolonial (intersectional) feminist thinking (cf. Papadopoulos 2021: 45).

are thus the “other” categories (reminiscent of the above introduced view on women in the context of “Sonderanthropologien”), can be seen as sexist (Brouwer 1985: 105). Gender-fair is thus gender-neutral in this view, and linguistic differentiation between the sexes is an undesirable feature, as it emphasises old, patriarchal and unbalanced social structures. In this way, differentiation of sexes, both on the societal and on the linguistic level, is regarded as an obstacle to gender equality and emancipation.

Neutralisation may take different shapes, of which the most controversial is the so-called generic masculine. The generic use of grammatically masculine forms has been a stumbling block in feminist language reform from the outset (cf. among others Martyna 1978; Moulton et al. 1978; Trömel-Plötz 1978; Pusch 1979; Silveira 1980). The term “generic” points to the use of a masculine form outside of an exclusively male context: in reference to a woman, to a mix-gender group, to an unknown or undefined referent. Such a linguistic form can be a PN in the singular or the plural (33) or a pronoun (34). Even though in many cases a feminised alternative to the PN is available, neutralisation strategies may include neutralising the masculine form even if its referent is female (35).

- (33) Ein **Lehrer** muss immer bereit sein, den **Schülern** zu helfen.
 a.MASC teacher.MASC must always prepared be the students.MASC to help
 ‘A teacher must always be prepared to help the students.’
- (34) Kan degene die **zijn** auto voor de deur heeft geparkeerd die gaan
 can the.one who his.MASC car in.front.of the door has parked that go
 verzetten, a.u.b.?
 move please
 ‘Can the person who parked his car in front of the door please move it?’
- (35) **Ondervoorzitter** Eva Verstappen heeft ontslag genomen.
 vice-president.MASC Eva Verstappen has resignation took
 ‘The vice-president Eva Verstappen has resigned.’

Generically used masculine PNs are controversial in the German-speaking area, but less so in the Dutch-speaking area (cf. below). They logically merely play a role in English, where the process of feminisation is unproductive.

Less controversially discussed means of neutralisation are forms that are specifically created as gender-neutral forms to PNs that are usually used binarily. Both Dutch and German can make use of this neutralisation strategy, which concerns forms such as Dutch *leerkracht* and German *Lehrkraft* ‘teacher’, i.e., formations in *-kracht/-kraft* as neutral alternatives to the binary pairs *leraar-lerares* and *Lehrer-Lehrerin* ‘teacher.¬F-teacher.F’. Nominalised adjectives and participles may serve as neutral PNs as well. On the grammatical level, they retain their adjectival inflectional properties and therefore do not participate in the process of noun feminisation; sex marking is included in its inflection. Thus, in Dutch they serve as neutral forms in both the singular and the plural, whereas in German they can only be used as neutral PNs in the plural, as singular adjectival inflections mark feminine and masculine gender.

- (36) a. Elke **gevaccineerde** kan nu terug op restaurant gaan.
 each vaccinated.person can now back on restaurant go
 ‘Each vaccinated person can now visit a restaurant again.’
- b. De **groenen** hebben tegen dat wetsvoorstel gestemd.
 the greens have against that bill voted
 ‘The green party has voted against that bill.’
- (37) a. **Ein Geimpfter** kann jetzt wieder ein Restaurant besuchen.
 a.MASC vaccinated.person.MASC can now again a restaurant visit
 ‘A vaccinated person can now visit a restaurant again.’
- b. Die **Grünen** haben gegen den Gesetzesvorschlag gestimmt.
 ‘the greens have against the bill voted
 ‘The green party has voted against the bill.’

Differentiation can be regarded as a strategy to counter gender imbalances with the help of language as well. As a linguistic exponent of *doing gender* (Garfinkel 1967), it originates in the idea that women should be made visible in society and language alike (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 17). The default use of masculine forms (in male and generic contexts, and for female referents) thus represents the so-called MAN-principle: the male-as-norm, which is seen as a pervasive characteristic of patriarchal societies, which led to the cognitive

perception of the male as the prototypical human being. Applied to language, it can be summarised as follows:

Finden sich keine expliziten Hinweise auf weibliches Geschlecht, greift der *male bias*. Sprachliches *undoing gender* scheint nicht zu funktionieren, die gut gemeinte Unsichtbarmachung von Geschlecht eröffnet nur den Raum für die männliche Normalvorstellung. Damit handelt es sich um ein echtes Dilemma.⁵⁵

(Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 115)

Hence, gender-fair language use in this reasoning is set to avoid the generic use of masculine linguistic forms, in order not to linguistically cover up the existence and societal value of women.

Differentiation can take place in gender-specific and in generic contexts. The former are characterised by consistent gender marking to a known singular referent (38), while the latter are characterised by either an ‘X or Y’-phrase for a singular generic referent, in which X stands for a possibly male referent and Y for a possibly female referent, or an ‘X and Y’-phrase (both phrases are known as “splitting”) for plural generic referents (39).

(38) **Ondervoorzitter** Eva Verstappen heeft ontslag genomen.
vice-president.FEM Eva Verstappen has resigned
‘The vice-president Eva Verstappen has resigned.’

(39) **Ein Lehrer** oder **eine Lehrerin** muss immer bereit sein, den
a.FEM teacher.MASC or a.FEM teacher.FEM must always prepared be the
Schülern und **Schülerinnen** zu helfen.
students.MASC and students.FEM to help
‘A teacher should always be prepared to help the students.’

In the German-speaking area, these X-and/or-Y-constructions have been criticised as “too long” and “uneconomic”, which led the feminist linguist Luise Pusch to introduce shortened

⁵⁵“If there is there is no specific reference to female sex, the male bias takes effect. Linguistic *undoing gender* does not appear to work, and rendering sex invisible, though well-intended, only makes room for the default male conceptualisation. Thereby, this is a real dilemma.” [N.V.]

forms containing the capitalised suffix *-In* (e.g., *LehrerIn(nen)*) that takes over the and/or-structure of the binary phrase. This form was in the first place a feature of written language, though Pusch suggested for the pronunciation of PNs ending in *-In* to insert a glottal stop between the base and the suffix (Pusch 2021). In the wake of non-binary gender-fair language use, alternative forms have arisen, and the binary glottal stop was repurposed as a marker for a non-binary PN. The glottal stop is now mostly associated with the so-called *Genderstern* ‘gender star’, referring to the asterisk symbol * in forms such as *Lehrer*innen*, that serves as a marker for non-binary gender-fair language use and is extended to pronouns as well: *jede*r*. Alternatives to the * symbol are also in use, notably the underscore (*Lehrer_innen*) and the colon (*Lehrer:innen*) (cf. Sökefeld 2022). The differentiation strategy of interest here is feminisation (in the context of female reference).

Because there are regional differences with regard to gender-fair language use views and policies, Dutch and German are further subdivided into two areas (North and South for Dutch, East and West for German) in the following sections. Despite the political support or even enforcement of either of the two above discussed strategies within these areas, discussions on their validity arise each time. The strategies, connected with their language areas, and their opponents or critics will be discussed here. Metalinguistic thought about language and gender, as outlined in the previous sections, is by no means new. However, in the context of language change, a more active and activist, reformist approach became relevant for the first time in the 20th century, under the influence of feminist linguistic thought and its subsequent feminist language reform. Before feminist language reform, and long before the current discussions in which broader communities participate mainly through (social) media, early grammars were the main sources through which information about how to interpret grammatical gender and, more specifically, morphological sex-marking features were available.

4.3 Differentiation and neutralisation in Dutch

4.3.1 North

In the late 16th century, the Dutch-speaking area that is now the Flemish part of the Low Countries was separated from the northern part (now the Netherlands). What is now Flanders remained under Spanish-Catholic rule after more than half a century of political and religious struggle between Catholics and Protestants. The northern Netherlands gained independence from Spanish rule, remained Protestant, and was economically strengthened mainly through active colonisation. The capital region, Holland, experienced a century of cultural glory. The first Dutch grammars were written in this socio-cultural and economical context, while the evolution toward a Dutch standard in the South stagnated. Crucially, the earliest Dutch grammarians worked prescriptively. H.L. Spieghel's *Twe-spraack* ('dialogue') from 1584 is widely known as the first Dutch grammar. Early Dutch grammars were based on Latin and Greek grammar, and not only dictated a sixfold case system, but also a threefold gender system. This is also the case in the *Twe-spraack*, where the masculine and feminine were regarded as two separate genders, based on their respective adnominal morphological markers on the article and the adjective (Spieghel 1584: 71). Grammatical gender is interpreted semantically, and Spieghel names male and female sex, proper names of men and women, and their occupations as the foremost semantic distinctions:

onder het Manlyck gheslacht komter letter alleenlyck/ Ghód, mensch, man, ende manlyke eyghen namen, ende ampten, als leraar/ koninck/ koopman/ smit/ boer/ etc. Des Wyfliken gheslachts zyn/ vrouw, de namen ende ampten der vrouwen, uytghenomen wyff⁵⁶

(Spieghel 1584: 72)

Spieghel does not cite any feminised forms. Crucially, occupational nouns are regarded not

⁵⁶“Under the male gender is marked only God, *mens* [‘human, person, man’], *man*, and male proper names and offices, like *leraar* [‘teacher.¬F’], *koning* [‘king.¬F’], *koopman* [‘merchant.¬F’], *smit* [‘smith.¬F’], *boer* [‘farmer.¬F’] etc. Of the female gender are *vrouw* [‘woman’], the proper names and the offices of women, except for *wijf* [‘wife’].” [N.V.]

only as pertaining to a grammatical class based on their morphological properties (feminised or non-feminised), but a clear distinction is made between male and female occupations. In other words, it can be derived from Spieghel’s wordings that an occupational noun such as *leraar* ‘teacher.¬F’ is seen as exclusively male in the *Twe-spraack*, regardless of its non-feminised form.

Spieghel’s presentation of the genders of nouns and their functions remained consensual throughout the 17th century. According to van Heule (1633), *-in* and *-ster* are the main feminising suffixes (cf. Chapter 5 for the diachronic productivity of feminisation patterns):

Eenige Mannelicke woorden / worden in Vrouwelicke verandert / nemende op het eynde (int gemeyn) Inne, of Ster, zo komt van Koninc, Koninginne, van Keyzer, Keyzerinne, van Graef komt Gravinne, van Boer, Vryer, Loper, Leeu, Wolf, Ezel, komt Boerinne, Vryster, Loopster, Leewinne, Wolvinne, en Ezelinne.

Daer zijn ooc eenige Vrouwelicke woorden / welke in esse eyndigen / als Princesse, Meestresse, Toveresse, deze worden schijnen vreemt te wezen / (alhoewel niet verwerpelic /) Dewijle wy geen woorden en hebben / die in Esse eyndigen.⁵⁷

(van Heule 1633: 29-30)

Based on these citations by Spieghel and van Heule, male and female occupations are apparently considered separate domains, although there may be an overlap when both sexes can carry out the same function (e.g., *boer-boerin* ‘farmer’). In any case, only feminised forms are considered female occupations, belonging to the feminine gender. Both van Heule (1633: 24) and Kók (1649: 23) use the term *motio* ‘movement’, which until today is widely known in German as *Movierung*. *Motio* is understood as morphological “movement” of non-

⁵⁷“Some male words are changed into female words, by taking at the end (generally) *-in* or *-ster*, and thus stems from *koning*, *koningin* [‘king’ – ‘queen’], *keizer*, *keizerin* [‘emperor’ – ‘empress’], from *graaf* stems *gravin* [‘count’ – ‘countess’], from *boer*, *vrijer*, *loper*, *leeuw*, *wolf*, *ezel* stems *boerin*, *vrijster*, *loopster*, *leewin*, *wolvin*, *ezelin* [‘farmer.¬F, runner.¬F, lion, wolf.¬F, donkey.¬F’ – ‘farmer.F, runner.F, lioness, wolf.F, donkey.F’]. There are also female words which end in *-esse*, such as *prinsesse* ‘princess’, *meesteresse* ‘mistress’, *toveresse* ‘witch, magician.F’. These words appear to be foreign (although not unacceptable), because we do not have words which end in *-esse*.” [N.V.]

inal elements in accordance with gender. Thus, feminisation is regarded as the same kind of process as gender declension of nominal elements:

Motio. Beweeghing is de verandering der Woorden in Gheslacht; en heeft plaats zo wel in de Zelfstandighe Naamwoorden; als, Koning, Koningin [...] als in de Byvoeghlijke; als, ghoedt, ghoede, ghoedt⁵⁸

(Kók 1649: 23)

After the 17th century, at the latest, it becomes evident that speakers of Dutch are no longer able to distinguish the masculine from the feminine gender. The physician and linguist David van Hoogstraten published a list of nouns including their “correct” genders, because, as he states in his preface, most authors commit “grove mislagen” (‘grave mistakes’) against the genders of the nouns (van Hoogstraten 1700: 2). While van Hoogstraten bases his gender-noun list on gender use by the “great writers” (the authors P.C. Hooft and Joost van den Vondel) of the 17th century, L.H. ten Kate (1723), who also includes a word list in his grammar, resorts to genders in older phases of Germanic languages: Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Franconian, and contemporary Icelandic and High German.

As stated before, 18th-century understanding of grammatical gender in relation to biological sex was influenced by anthropologies in which women were regarded as the “other” category and men as the default human being. Along the same lines, characteristics were attributed to men and women, and the genders of the nouns referring to inanimate (abstract and concrete) entities were interpreted as the exponents of sex-related properties. In Verwer (1783), as well as Winkelman (1784), and even as late as the late 19th century in Terwey (1883), masculine and feminine inanimate nouns are considered so because of their supposed masculine and feminine properties. Therefore, Verwer (1783: 21) names *voorspraak* ‘advocacy, intercession’ and *ondeugd* ‘vice, mischief’ as masculine nouns; *laster* ‘harassment, defamation’ and *nijd* ‘jealousy’ must be feminine, according to Winkelman (1784: 19). For

⁵⁸“*Motio.* Movement is the change of the words in gender. It takes place both in nouns (*koning-koningin* ‘king-queen’) and in adjectives (*goed-goede-goed* ‘good’).” [N.V.]

Terwey (1883), all powerful and working nouns are masculine, while all weak and passive nouns are feminine:

Als algemeen grond der onderscheiding bij levenlooze voorwerpen kan men aannemen, dat voorwerpen, welke men aanmerkt als krachtig en werkend, tot het mannelijk geslacht, die, welke men beschouwde als zwak of lijdend, tot het vrouwelijk geslacht werden gerekend.⁵⁹

(Terwey 1883: 63)

In a more Brugmannian sense, but resorting to the same anthropological view on the sexes, de Groot (1873) concludes that the genders of inanimate nouns cannot be linked with male or female characteristics. If this were the case, he reasons, then every grammatically feminine word should denote small, late, soft, passive, and receiving entities, whereas masculine nouns should denote big, early, brave, active, moving, and engendering entities – which is not the case (de Groot 1873: 199, §208). The author names three feminisation processes in Dutch, namely *-es*, *-in*, and *-ster*, and he categorises *-in* as onymic (de Groot 1873: 145-146, §157). The suffix *-e* is mentioned in the context of nouns that are classified as epicene by the author, such as *leerling* ‘pupil.¬F’ and *erfgenaam* ‘heir.¬F’. These nouns to him are “susceptible” (ibid: 209, §214) to feminisation.

Around the same time, M. de Vries and L.A. te Winkel published their word lists and dictionary of the Dutch language, the first editions of the influential *Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal* ‘Dictionary of the Dutch Language’. Nouns in *-ling* are considered epicene, much like *genoot* ‘companion.¬F’, *wees* ‘orphan.¬F’, *erfgenaam* ‘heir.¬F’. Nevertheless, de Vries & te Winkel (1866: XIV) observe *-e* to become productive in feminising these presumed epicenes during the 19th century. This innovation in Dutch, involving a suffix which is non-existent in German, may explain why German *-ling*-formations still are reluctant to be feminised,

⁵⁹“As a general rule for the [gender] distinction in inanimate things one can assume that such thing which are regarded as powerful and working can be assigned the masculine gender, and those which are considered weak or patient are assigned the feminine gender.” [N.V.]

whereas in Dutch they are likely candidates. The authors classify feminisation of these semi-epicenes as “een gebruik dat, bevorderlijk aan de duidelijkheid, alle aanbeveling verdient”⁶⁰ (ibid.: xv). In the same vein, their 1866 word list contains feminised items as lemmas – they are thus not merely listed under their non-feminised counterparts. This is reminiscent of the 2021 decision by the Duden dictionary to list feminised PNs as lemmas,⁶¹ although the underlying reasoning in the 19th century is more semantic clarity and less gender equality. Still, feminised nouns are considered the default forms in referring to women. All non-feminised nouns in the word and spelling list by de Vries & te Winkel (1866) are marked as grammatically masculine, and feminised nouns as grammatically feminine. The authors explain this as resulting from their meanings: they consider a PN such as *kok* ‘cook.¬F’ to be a “male name”, at the same level as a proper name and a noun in which male sex is lexically determined, such as *heer* ‘gentleman’ (de Vries & te Winkel 1866: xvi). In spite of this, not every non-feminised PN receives a feminised counterpart in their list. They list a noun such as *vijandin* ‘enemy.F’ and *aanhangster* ‘supporter.F, follower.F’ lemmas, but a noun such as *slotenmaker* ‘locksmith.¬F’ stands by itself, without a feminised lemma by its side. Generally, 19th-century grammarians (cf. next to de Vries & te Winkel 1866; de Groot 1873 also Weiland 1805; Brill 1849) consider the aforementioned PNs to be epicenes, with *-e* being the innovative feminising suffix. In terms of feminisation processes, *-e* is only mentioned in the context discussed above. Generally, the suffixes *-in*, *-es(se)* and *-ster* are named as regular processes before the 20th century; ten Kate (1723: 68) also names *-ersche* and, although by that time their observation is unlikely a correct rendition of reality (cf. Chapter 5), Ahn & Van Laun (1877: 22, §59) state that “the Dutch add generally *in* to the masculine.”

Throughout the centuries, the semantic difference between feminised and non-feminised nouns was uncontested. Only a handful of nouns are mentioned in 19th-century grammars and word lists as denoting both sexes, and these are then listed as increasingly joining the range of feminisable nouns, as *-e* becomes more productive. There is no mention of a

⁶⁰“a use which is very recommendable, because it improves clarity” [N.V.]

⁶¹<https://www.ndr.de/kultur/Duden-gendert-seit-2021-alle-12000-Berufsbezeichnungen,duden132.html> [Accessed 21-11-2023].

generic capacity of masculine nouns, which are regularly denoted as male nouns. Simultaneously, there is a presumed sex-based semantic core in an artificially upheld Northern Dutch three-gender-system. All cited sources name biological sex as the semantic basis for gender attributions to nouns. The perspective on Dutch grammar and its relation to sex between the 16th and the 19th centuries is similar to the contemporary understanding of German gender. Only by that time in Dutch, this idea of a threefold gender system, in which the masculine and the feminine coincide with male and female gender, was artificially kept alive. Therefore, it is undoubtedly mainly linked with normative and standard language use. Prescriptive grammarians attempted, until the late 19th century, to have their Dutch-speaking audiences relearn the correct historical gender of nouns by publishing word lists containing gender information.

Until the second half of the 20th century, it was widely accepted among grammarians and linguists that there were nouns to denote men and nouns to denote women, and that these nouns had one grammatical gender each. This makes it likely that feminisation up until then was the default case in referring to women. Other elements which support feminisation are found in societal structures. Male and female societal domains were largely separated until well into the 20th century. Hence, there was no real need to consider linguistic options other than differentiation. The main idea behind neutralisation of PNs is directly linked with the fact that since the second half of the 20th century, the daily lives of men and women have overlapped to a great extent: neutralisation is regarded as a means to undo constructed gender differences mainly in the professional domain, which women have increasingly gained access to during this time. This also means that there has been an increasing need to use forms referring to mixed-gender groups. Moreover, in assuming more roles in society, more nouns are now used not only in reference to men, but also to women. This is where the role of feminism comes into play, as feminists in the 20th century pointed to a male-oriented language use that up until then had been widely accepted as the normal status quo. In the Netherlands, the name Joke Kool-Smit is connected with the Dutch feminist movement that arose in the 1960s. Kool-Smit's essay *Het onbehagen bij de vrouw* 'The unease of woman' was

published in 1967 and counts as programmatic to feminism in the Netherlands. Kool-Smit evaluates the achievements of “the feminists” (now commonly known as first-wave feminism) and concludes that none of three aspirations have been completely achieved by 1967: woman as a free human being, woman as a person who can develop herself and her potentials, and woman as an equal and full member of society (Kool-Smit 1967: 267). The author co-founded the feminist organisation *Man Vrouw Maatschappij* ‘Man Woman Society’ in 1968, which would come to play a politically relevant role in the 1980s. It played the leading role in the Dutch so-called second-wave feminist movement. In the context of 1960s and 1970s feminism, language and its relation to sex became an important topic. The historian Annie Romein-Verschoor published her influential article *Taal en seks, seksisme en emancipatie* ‘Language and sex, sexism and emancipation’ in 1975, the first Dutch feminist publication that brought language to the fore. The idea of the article is that a person’s sex does not matter in carrying out a certain professional function or role. In Romein-Verschoor’s view, and with her the feminist organisation *Man Vrouw Maatschappij*, binary linguistic constructions reflect the unbalanced societal statuses of men and women. In emphasising sex linguistically, it is constructed as a relevant feature in every aspect life in which it should not be:

[V]oor een reeks van functies op opvoedkundig, psychologisch, sociologisch, maatschappelijk en wetenschappelijk terrein wordt er – althans in beginsel – niet gediscrimineerd. In de taalpraktijk evenwel ontbreken ons de middelen om op dit punt een volstrekte neutraliteit in acht te nemen en dus vervallen we in een vorm van ‘gelijkstelling’ die nu juist als zodanig een discriminatie inhoudt. Zie tientallen advertenties in dag- en weekbladen: *gevraagd een psycholo(og)(ge), sociolo(og)(ge), direct(eur)(rice), secretar(is)(ess)*, etcetera. *Wij verwachten van hem/haar, dat hij/zij zijn/haar taak* enzovoort. Juist dezer dagen heeft een kamerlid vragen ingediend over dit soort discriminatie en terecht, want in de we-

reld waarin we vooralsnog leven, moet men onvermijdelijk uit zo'n tekst lezen dat ook een persoon met een vrouwelijke geslachtsapparatuur voor deze functie bruikbaar is.⁶²

(Romein-Verschoor 1975: 6-7)

Thus, after having observed that Dutch PNs are regularly feminised as what she understands as an act that is intended as non-discriminatory, Romein-Verschoor argues against feminisation, because it performatively and unintentionally leads to discrimination. The term performativity in connection with gender was later introduced by Judith Butler, but the argumentation is similar:

[G]ender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. [...] There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results.

(Butler 2007 [1990]: 34)

Language, in the opinion of Romein-Verschoor, is thus one such instrument that performatively helps construct gender.

These findings became politically relevant in the 1980s. In 1980, the Dutch government passed a new labour law that acknowledged the feminist cause: the *Wet gelijke behandeling van mannen en vrouwen bij de arbeid* ('Law for the equal treatment of men and women regarding labour'). As significantly more women were entering the job market (cf. Fig. 4.1), their equal treatment in that domain became a political concern. One of the main issues that needed to be tackled was of a linguistic nature, namely the correct non-discriminatory

⁶²“Especially in a range of educational, psychological, sociological, societal and scientific functions, there is – at least at first hand – no discrimination. In language use, however, we lack the means to express ourselves in a completely neutral way and thus we resort to a kind of ‘equality’ that ironically implies a discrimination. Look at dozens of advertisements in newspapers and magazines: *looking for a psychologist.M.F, sociologist.M.F, director.M.F., secretary.M.F. etc. We expect of him/her to fulfill his/her task etc.* Only these days a MEP presented a petition about this kind of discrimination, and rightly so, because in the world we still live in, we inevitably read that a person with female genitalia is also usable for this function.” [N.V.]

use of profession nouns.⁶³ Names for jobs, functions, and titles which until then had nearly exclusively been reserved for men were now also unrestrictedly required to apply to women. Job advertisements needed to be written in a non-discriminatory way, “in such a way that it was clear that both women and men could apply” (Gerritsen 2001: 102). This requirement proved to be a thought-provoking mechanism for (especially Dutch) linguists, because it uncovered a peculiar linguistic situation: PNs (mainly, however, professional nouns) which had formerly only been used in one of two forms (non-feminised or feminised, depending on the professional domain) now posed a legal problem in job advertisements. To account for equal professional rights and chances, an exclusively masculine/feminine PN should, as a short-term solution, be accompanied by *(m/v)* ‘m/f’ (Ruijsendaal 1986: 733). This led to the addition of an *(m/v)* even to compounds such as *vroedvrouw (m/v)* ‘midwife (m/f)’ and *timmerman (m/v)* ‘carpenter (m/f)’. The addition of *(m/v)* to sex-specific compounds with *vrouw* and *man* had a somewhat contradictory, even comical appeal. In the end, “this law led to an enormous chaos in names for professions in personal advertisements” (Gerritsen 2002: 19). However, there had never been a masculine counterpart to e.g., *vroedvrouw* ‘midwife’ in use, nor a feminine counterpart to e.g., *timmerman* ‘carpenter’. In cases other than compounding with *vrouw* or *man*, solutions were somewhat easier: feminine suffixes can often easily be added to masculine forms, and job ads would then contain forms such as *directeur/trice* ‘director.−F.F.’ (Gerritsen 2001: 103). Crul (2011) criticises that traditionally female occupations, such as *vroedvrouw* ‘midwife’ and *verpleegster* ‘nurse’ were quite rapidly neutralised as soon as men entered these occupational domains, but that the same is not true for male-dominated domains to which women had gained access.

The Ministry of Social Affairs commissioned a work group, which, in collaboration with the Ministry, was to investigate the matter and come up with a conclusive proposal (van Alphen 1983: 307; Ruijsendaal 1986: 733). The work group in question was the aforementioned feminist organisation *Man Vrouw Maatschappij*. It published the outcome of its

⁶³The new labour law was quickly noted as linguistically relevant, and there is a range of articles reflecting on the role of linguistics in this political context. “Het gebeurt niet vaak dat sociale wetten bepalingen bevatten die direct op taal betrekking hebben” (‘It does not happen very often that social laws contain regulations which directly affect language’) writes Adriaens (1982: 1).

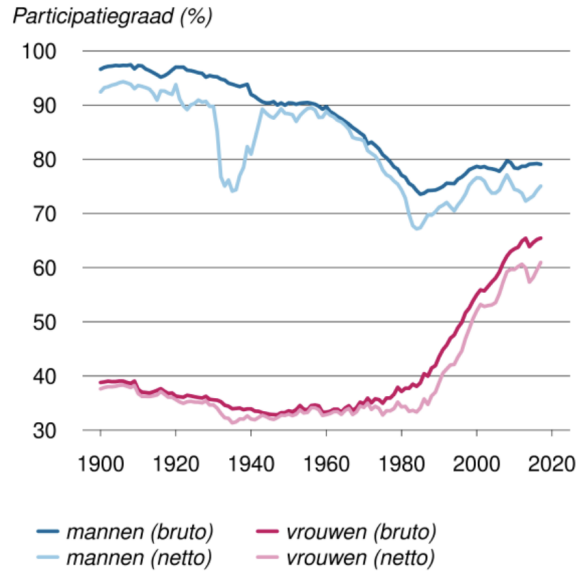


Figure 4.1: Participation degree of Dutch men (blue) and women (red) on the job market between 1900 and 2018 (cpb 2018: 8).

discussion (a brochure titled *Gevraagd* ‘Requested’) that same year. The brochure essentially builds on Romein-Verschoor’s concept of gender expression through language that is superfluous in the domain of profession names. This view was then taken up again in 1982, when the neutralisation of profession nouns became politically relevant. The years following the brochure’s publication were marked by controversy. In the end, none of the guidelines published by the Ministry of Social Affairs, in cooperation with *Man Vrouw Maatschappij*, became official (Gerritsen 2002: 100). The controversy surrounding the guidelines was not only a reaction to the neutralisation recommendation but also to newly coined profession nouns (e.g. *timmer* instead of *timmerman/-vrouw* ‘carpenter’). One of the leading voices against neutralisation of non-feminised PNs was and is Ingrid van Alphen, who considers formations such as *timmer* non-neutral but rather, much like other non-feminised PNs, male-specific (van Alphen 1983). Notwithstanding these arguments against neutralisation of PNs, the practice is now widely associated with female emancipation and the go-to strategy for gender-fair language use in the Netherlands. Neutralisation received another boost in recent years, because, while it has never been politically enforced, it is the non-binary gender-fair

strategy in multiple newspapers, magazines, public institutions, and companies. The newspapers *De Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad* are known for their editorial neutralisation guidelines (de Jong 2018; Volkskrant 2023), with which they aim at gender-fair language use to include non-binary gender identities. The Dutch railway company, *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* (NS), announced in 2017 that it was no longer addressing its passengers as *dames en heren* ‘ladies and gentlemen’ and changed its form of address to *beste reizigers* ‘dear passengers’:

“Beste dames en heren, jongens en meisjes, LBGTQIA+’ers en iedereen met een geldig vervoersbewijs.” Wij vonden het wat lang. En toch vinden we het van belang dat iedereen zich bij ons welkom voelt. [...] Daarom kiezen we ervoor om onze reizigers vanaf de nieuwe dienstregeling aan te spreken met ‘beste reizigers’.⁶⁴

(“Beste reizigers...”, *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* 2017)

Importantly, the NS questions the gender-inclusivity of the phrase ‘ladies and gentlemen’, because it does not include every person traveling with the company, but it does not question the neutral meaning of *reiziger* ‘traveller, passenger.→F’, a noun that can in principle be feminised into *reizigster*. The same reasoning is found in the style guide of *De Volkskrant*:

De Volkskrant streeft seksegelijkheid na in taalgebruik. Vermijd daarom constructies waaruit de indruk kan ontstaan dat het mannelijke de norm is en het vrouwelijke de uitzondering. Bij het beschrijven van iemands beroep kiezen we zo veel mogelijk de neutrale variant. [...] Mannen en vrouwen worden in principe met dezelfde term aangeduid. Een directeur heet een directeur ook als het een

⁶⁴“Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, LBGTQIA+-affiliated, and everyone with a valid ticket.” We found it a bit too long. And still we find it important that everyone feels welcome with us. [...] That is why we choose to address our passengers as ‘dear passengers’ from the new schedule onward.” [N.V.]

vrouw is. Voor een winkelier, columnist, eigenaar, bewoner, bergbeklimmer, activist, conducteur, voetballer of schoonmaker geldt hetzelfde.⁶⁵

(“Stijlboek”, *De Volkskrant* 2023)

As these contemporary examples show, there is a widespread tendency in the Netherlands to neutralise non-feminised nouns and to regard them as gender-neutral, in spite of some voices of dissent. Neutralisation is a ubiquitous characteristic of public life and of Dutch news media. The view on feminisation changed throughout the centuries. In older grammars, until the late 19th century, it was regarded as a semantic necessity in the context of artificial and prescriptive preservation of a three-gender system, which grammarians linked with sex. In the 20th century, Dutch feminists promoted neutralisation as the linguistic reflexion of the idea that women are no second-rate human category, as was the reasoning behind the anthropologically motivated view on the relation between sex and grammatical gender in the 18th and 19th centuries. One crucial element in early Dutch grammars is the fact that the feminised examples given by the authors mostly do not run parallel to their non-feminised counterparts. Hence, there is no trace of a rigorous (prescriptive) use of feminised forms in domains that are considered male by grammarians. Although some similar discussions took place in Flanders, developments are somewhat distinct from those in the Netherlands. They will be discussed in the following section.

4.3.2 South

While the Northern Dutch area has known a centuries-old tradition of grammar writing, the South lacked official language norms, although there were some prescriptive publications, starting in the early 18th century (Vosters et al. 2014: 75). The publications discussed here are the ones listed in Vosters et al. (2014: 2.2.1-2.2.3).

⁶⁵“*De Volkskrant* pursues gender equality in language use. Therefore we avoid constructions from which the impression may arise that the male is the norm and the female the exception. When describing someone’s profession, we choose the neutral variant as much as possible. [...] Men and women are in principle denoted by the same term. A director.-F is called a director.-F even if it is a woman. The same counts for a retailer.-F, columnist.-F, owner.-F, inhabitant.-F, mountain climber.-F, conductor.-F, activist.-F, football player.-F or a cleaner.-F.” [N.V.]

Reminiscent of 18th-century Dutch grammars, van Geesdalle (1700) states, rather shortly, in his contrastive Flemish-French grammar that all names for men and their qualities are masculine, while all names for women and their qualities are feminine (van Geesdalle 1700: 77). Likewise, there is only a short statement about the gender for male names (masculine) and the gender for female names (feminine) in De Witte (1713: 35-36). In Des Roches (1761), there is information about the genders in connection with their declensional properties, but no information about the grounds on which gender assignment occurs. All have in common that they compare the gender system of “the” Southern Dutch language (which they call *Nederduits* ‘Low German’) with the threefold Latin gender system. This threefold system is undisputed, not only in Northern sources, but also in the South (although here it was much less artificially constructed). Concrete examples are named in Ter Bruggen (1817). Once again, under male properties (and hence the masculine gender) examples are listed such as *vorst* ‘king.¬F’, *vijand* ‘enemy.¬F’, *held* ‘hero.¬F’ *borger* [*burger*] ‘citizen.¬F’, *dief* ‘thief.¬F’, etc. (Ter Bruggen 1817: 10); their feminised counterparts are listed as pertaining to the female sex and therefore the feminine gender (*ibid.*: 12). This is repeated in Gyselynck (1819: 29-31) and Moke (1823: 19). Interestingly, the examples for male and female occupations, roles, and properties, except for royal titles, do not run parallel: male example PNs are *hoogleraar* ‘professor.¬F’, *voorzitter* ‘chairman’ (Gyselynck 1819: 30) and *priester* ‘priest.¬F’, *soldaat* ‘soldier.¬F’ (Moke 1823: 19). Female example PNs, however, are *naeyster* [*naaister*] ‘sewer.F’ and *boerin* ‘farmer.F’ (Gyselynck 1819: 31). Hence, for a non-feminised PN such as *soldaat* ‘soldier.¬F’, for instance, the authors do not give the feminised *soldate* ‘soldier.F’.

Southern normative writing on gender before the 20th century does not differ from Northern grammars. Nonetheless, Southern authors remain brief on the subject. This briefness can be considered a prelude to 20th- and 21st-century approaches to language and sex. While the issue of differentiation of PNs was discussed in the 1970s in the Netherlands, the topic seemed to be less of an issue in Flanders and it first received some public attention in the 1990s. Rather than a debate on gender-fair language use, the choice for differentiation

was at first a political matter. The linguist Patricia Niedzwiecki was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Social Emancipation, Miet Smet, to draw up a “feminisation code” (Van Nieuwenhuysen 1994). This code was tasked with containing recommendations on how to feminise professions, offices, degrees, and titles (ibid.). Since the feminisation code was intended to be valid federally, the multilingual situation in Belgium – where Dutch encounters two languages with sex-based gender systems – played a role here. Feminisation seemed to fit the French-speaking area of Belgium well, and the Walloon government made differentiation obligatory in official documents in 1993 (Gerritsen 2002: 101; Lutjeharms 2019), taking effect on January 1, 1994 (Van Varenbergh 1994: 101). The recommendation of feminisation was received more controversially in the Dutch-speaking area of Belgium by linguists who criticised newly coined terms such as *ministerinne* ‘minister.F’ (Gerritsen 2002: 101). On these grounds, the *Raad van de Gelijke Kansen voor Mannen en Vrouwen* ‘Council of Equal Opportunities for Men and Women’ advised that a language commission judge the problem, but that sex-neutral linguistic forms (of the epicene type *leerkracht* ‘teacher’) were preferable (Van Varenbergh 1994: 101). This commission was the *Comité van Ministers* ‘Committee of Ministers’ of the *Taalunie*⁶⁶ (‘Language Union’), which stated on October 26, 1996, that the recommendations in Niedzwiecki’s list could not be implemented by the state, and that there was not enough consensus among linguists to prescribe such rules by the state (Grouwels 1998: 10). The *Vlaamse Overlegcommissie Vrouwen* ‘Flemish Conciliation Committee [for] Women’ argued in favour of neutral terms as well, and against splitting (feminised and non-feminised terms), but contended that a list of feminised items was valuable as well, and such a list should be published (VOV 1994: 110-111). On behalf of the *Taalunie*, the linguists Johan De Caluwe (Belgium) and Ariane van Santen (Netherlands) published a handbook offering an overview of the options that exist in Dutch to use *functiebenamingen* ‘function names’ (actually PNs), with the intention of helping language users opt for either differentiation or neutralisation, in line with what the readers themselves deemed best. This handbook (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001) can be regarded as closing the discussion and leaving each

⁶⁶The *Taalunie* is an organisation founded by the Dutch and Belgian governments that serves as their advisor in all matters of language.

option open for each person individually. A state-regulated neutralisation (or differentiation) policy never took effect. The indecisive tone of the debate in Belgium is also reflected in a conference held in March, 1998, at the Free University of Brussels. Here, linguists from the Low Countries gathered to discuss their insights on the matter of feminisation versus differentiation. Different opinions were discussed, and the conference reflected the indecisive tone of the debate in Flanders. The findings of one empirical study were discussed, which offered some insight into the use of profession nouns in 17 different news media sources in Flanders in the 1990s (Huybrecht 1998). Of the 4040 nouns found by Huybrecht, only about 10% were in reference to women; generic reference occurred in about 40% of instances, and male reference in about 50%. Of the profession nouns with a female referent, 80.9% were feminised, 14.5% non-feminised, and 4.4% neutral or anglicisms (Huybrecht 1998: 72).⁶⁷ The main finding in the study was an imbalance between feminised nouns denoting occupations in the care sector and non-feminised nouns denoting leading positions, e.g., *hoofdredacteur* ‘head editor.→F’ instead of feminised *hoofdredactrice* (ibid.: 73). Huybrecht therefore concluded that regulations were called for – feminisation or differentiation – to ensure consistency. For the author, the imbalance of feminisation and neutralisation on different semantic domains is the main issue, and exponent of sexism, and this needed to be tackled:

De vorm van de beroepsnamen is bijgevolg dikwijls in verhouding met de inhoud van het beroep. Uit [het onderzoek] kunnen we besluiten dat zolang er een system bestaat dat willekeurig gebruik maakt van grammatical mannelijke, vrouwelijke, sekseneutrale én Engelse beroepsaanduidingen, dit in het nadeel is van de vrouw, en dat daarom een duidelijke keuze noodzakelijk is.⁶⁸

(Huybrecht 1998: 75)

Thus, the discussion on the form of PNs referring to women took place in Belgium more than a decade after it was more or less settled in the Netherlands. The tendency is less clearly

⁶⁷Huybrecht sees anglicisms as a distinct (neutral) category.

⁶⁸“As a consequence, the form of profession nouns is often related to the content of the profession. From the study we can conclude that long as there is a system which arbitrarily makes use of grammatically masculine, feminine, gender-neutral and English profession nouns, this is at the disadvantage of women, and therefore a clear choice is necessary.” [N.V.]

inclined toward neutralisation than it is in the Netherlands, and news media do not – to my knowledge – make use of an explicit neutralisation policy. To date, the Flemish government⁶⁹ refers to the Taalunie website for its recommendations concerning gender-fair language use. Of the news media that will be investigated empirically, only *De Standaard* comments on its use of feminisation. It argues against Dutch newspapers such as *De Volkskrant*, which is very open about its neutralisation policy. In *De Standaard*, the choice for or against feminisation is left to each author individually, as well as to the preference of the interviewee. It is further argued that feminisation is mostly not a problem, as most forms can be feminised.⁷⁰ Much like the gender system itself, Flemish gender-inclusive language use takes a stance in between Northern Dutch and German, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 Differentiation and neutralisation in German

Doleschal (2002) extensively investigated early German grammars, and the following findings largely stem from her analysis. Early German grammars were published in Latin during the Renaissance period, around the same time as early Northern Dutch grammars. For German, both Oelinger (1574) and Clajus Hertzberg (1578) classify as masculine-gender nouns all nouns *virorum*, *officiorum virilium* ‘men and offices of men’ and as feminine-gender nouns all nouns *mulierum*, *muliebrium officiorum* ‘women and offices of women’ (Oelinger 1574: 33, 40; Clajus Hertzberg 1578: 27-28). Feminisation (“motio”) is treated more thoroughly than in Dutch grammars,⁷¹ and, unsurprisingly, only examples in *-in* are listed. Clajus Hertzberg (1578) covers feminisation separately and lists examples which run parallel to his masculine examples: *Keyser* [*Kaiser*] ‘emperor’ – *Keyserin* [*Kaiserin*] ‘empress’; *Schmid* [*Schmied*] ‘smith.¬F’ – *Schmidin* [*Schmiedin*] ‘smith.F’ etc., except for *Bürgermeister* ‘mayor.¬F’, for which he gives no feminised example (Clajus Hertzberg 1578: 22). Examples for feminisation are generally only roles and occupations which were open to women. Geographical names

⁶⁹<https://www.vlaanderen.be/team-taaladvies/taaladviezen/genderbewust-genderinclusief-taalgebruik> [Accessed 20-11-2023].

⁷⁰<https://www.standaard.be/geoelig-lexicon> [Accessed 20-11-2023].

⁷¹Perhaps this is no coincidence: feminisation is conceivably a more prevalent feature of German in post-medieval language use than Dutch.

occur in Clajus Hertzberg (1578: 22), and Oelinger (1574: 33) names *Schneiderin* ‘tailor.F’, *Bettlerin* ‘beggar.F’, *Jüdin* ‘jewish woman’. Ritter (1616) continued this tradition; all named grammars mention not only that the sexes are spread over the masculine and feminine grammatical gender, but that inanimate entities can also partly be assigned one of these categories, based on their semantics (e.g., that all months are masculine).

In the 17th century, grammarians addressed the suffix *-in* in terms of its productivity (Doleschal 2002: 45), while staying within the 16th-century tradition of a semantics-based gender assignment. Bödiker (1698: 60-61) reflects on feminisation contrastively: “Die Motio substantivorum oder Geschlechts-Abwandelung geschiehet in dem Deutschen auf inn und ist viel reichlicher als in den anderen Sprachen.”⁷² In this context, we find examples of feminisation which by current standards are uncommon, e.g., *Teutschin* [*Deutschin*] ‘German woman’, *Unholdin* ‘fiend.F’ (Schottel 1663: 355-356), *Gläubigin* ‘creditor.F’, *Parnassin* ‘inhabitant of the Parnassus mountain range’ (Bödiker 1698: 60). Looking at the occurrences of these nouns in the DWDS corpora, they do appear to have been in use in the 17th century, after which all of them became more uncommon (Fig. 4.2). This is also noted in Adelung (1782: 325). As Bödiker (1698: *ibid.*) further states, *in*-formations are possible for all inhabitant names.

⁷²“Motio substantivorum [feminisation] or sex modification takes place in German by *-in* and is much more abundant than in other languages.” [N.V.]

Gläubigerin · Teutschin · Unholdin · Parnassin – Verlaufskurve

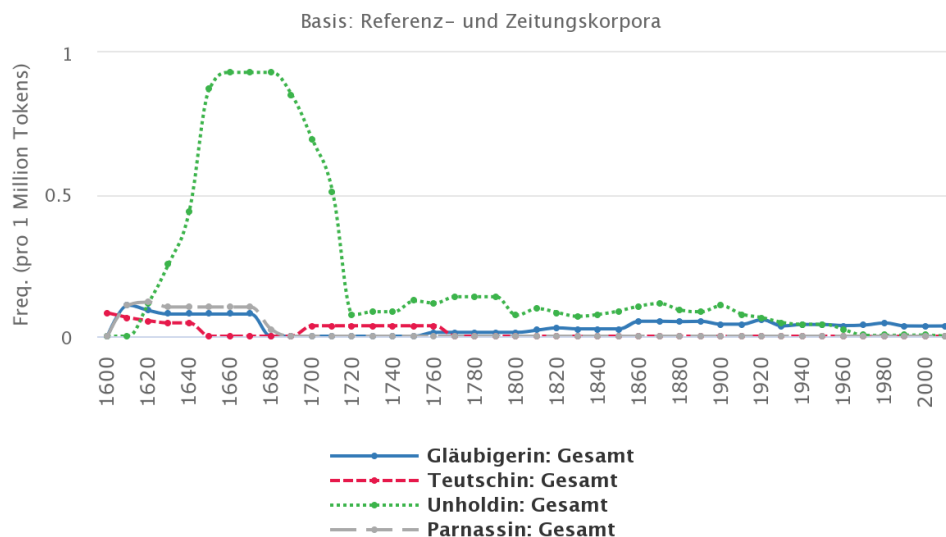


Figure 4.2: Relative token frequencies of *Gläubigerin*, *Teutschin*, *Unholdin*, *Parnassin* in DWDS corpora (1600-2010), downloaded via: <https://www.dwds.de/r/plot/> [Accessed 18-10-2023].

German grammars also mentioned feminised titles, e.g., *Doct(o)rin* [*Doktorin*] ‘Doctor’, *Magistrin* ‘Master’ (Albertus 1573; Oelinger 1574; Gottsched 1757: 215), as well as *Feldmarschallin* ‘field marshal.F’ and *Freyherrin* [*Freiherrin*] ‘baron.F’ (Gottsched 1748: 167; Gottsched 1757: 215), which, however, are onymic uses of *-in*:

[...] wo das Frauenvolk nicht selbst die Dienste thut, da behalten sie den Namen ihrer Männer, mit einer weiblichen Endung.

Minister – Ministerinn,

[...]

Bürgermeister – Bürgermeisterinn, u.s.w.⁷³

(Gottsched 1757: 207)

Doleschal notes that a first hint of the ambiguous semantics of masculine PNs (male-specific or generic) can be found already in Gottsched’s grammar:

⁷³“When women do not fulfill this function themselves, they receive the names of their husbands, with a female ending. *Minister–Ministerin* ‘minister’ [...] *Bürgermeister–Bürgermeisterin* ‘mayor.’” [N.V.]

Weiters stellt die Formulierung “Wörter, die männliche (...) Ämter (...) bedeuten” gegenüber “Alle Namen des Frauenvolks” eine Innovation dar, in der ansatzweise die Doppeldeutigkeit männlicher Personenbezeichnungen angelegt ist. Denn im Gegensatz zu den “Nahmen der Männer” Schottels sind “Wörter die männliche Ämter bedeuten” im Prinzip auch auf Nicht-Männer anwendbar.⁷⁴

(Doleschal 2002: 49)

For Aichinger (1754), some male occupations can be carried out by women as well (e.g., *Wirthin* [*Wirtin*] ‘host’, *Bäuerin* ‘farmer.F’), but if this is not the case, then feminisation is onymic, as in *Bürgermeisterin* ‘mayor.F’, *Schusterin* ‘schoemaker.F’ (Aichinger 1754: 191-192). The overlap between male and female occupations was also seen in Dutch grammars, where they were apparently generally considered two different domains. Onymic use is only mentioned in de Groot (1873: 145-146, §157).

Adelung (1782) writes in the anthropological tradition that was also seen in 18th- and mainly 19th-century Dutch grammars. He assumes that each inanimate noun received its gender on the basis of its association with either of the sexes, and that this can be traced back to the anthropocentric thinking of the “primitive inventors of language”: “den rohen und ganz sinnlichen Spracherfindern [...] und noch jetzt den Wilden [ist] alles belebt, alles beseelt” (Adelung 1782: 344). Grimm (1890 [1831]), as outlined above, writes in the same tradition. The masculine base, from which feminine *in*-derivations are derived, is taken as proof of the prevalence of the male sex by Westphal (1869: 86), and, regarding derivation of feminines in African languages it is stated that “because man forms language, the gender distinction is based on the particularity of the feminine”⁷⁵ (Lepsius 1880: xxii, 2). A more balanced approach is found in Becker (1837), who analyses the German gender system in a contemporary way, with a sex-based core and an inanimate rest following formal gender

⁷⁴“Furthermore, the formulation “words that denote male offices” compared to “all names of women” is an innovation, in which the ambiguity of male PNs is included to some extent. For, as opposed to Schottel’s “names of men”, the phrase “words which denote male offices” can in principle also be applied to non-men.” [N.V.]

⁷⁵“Da der Mann die Sprache bildet, so geht die Unterscheidung der Geschlechter von der Aussonderung des Femininums aus.”

assignment rules.

In the early 20th century, descriptive and prescriptive grammars differed in their treatment of feminisation (Doleschal 2002: 54). Whereas descriptive grammarians indicated the generic use of masculine PNs,⁷⁶ prescriptive grammarians stuck to a disambiguating use of feminising morphology. Blatz (1881) and Wilmanns (1909) belong to the former group, while the latter comprises of Matthias (1897), Wustmann (1903), and Engel (1918) who does not even oppose feminisation of *ling*-formations such as *Lieblingin* ‘favourite.F’ (Engel 1918: 97). These authors did not, however, have feminist intentions by making feminisation explicit, as Doleschal (2002: 58) demonstrates by citing Wustmann (1903):

Seitdem die Universitäten den Titel “Doktor” (als ob er eine Versteinerung wäre, von der kein Femininum gebildet werden könnte!) an Damen verleihen, liest man auf Büchertiteln: *Dr. Hedwig Michaelson*. Setzt man davor noch *Fräulein*, so hat man glücklich drei Geschlechter nebeneinander: *Fräulein* (sächlich) *Doktor* (männlich) *Hedwig* (weiblich). Freilich ist dabei eigentlich nichts verwunderliches. Die Verschrobenheit der Sprache ist ja nur das Abbild von der Verschrobenheit der Sache.⁷⁷

(Wustmann 1903: 271)

Rather, a rigorous separation of the male and female social domains seems to have been the main steering factor in praising the use of feminising morphology as a reflection of societal status. Until the first half of the 20th century, thus, feminisation had not been questioned as the “right” process in prescriptive grammars, although some authors already hinted at a possible abstracting use of masculine PNs in descriptive grammars. The German post-war situation, with the division of East and West, was the background against which these

⁷⁶They are generic insofar as they are being used in reference to women in specific contexts, and mainly in predicative position, but they are not cited in an abstract way to a generic referent (Doleschal 2002: 56-57).

⁷⁷“Since universities award the title “Doctor” (as if it were a fossil, from which no feminine could be formed!) to women, one can read on book titles: *Dr. Hedwig Michaelson*. If one puts a *Fräulein* in front of it, than one fortunately obtains three sexes next to each other: *Fräulein* (neuter), *Doctor* (male) *Hedwig* (female). Certainly, there is nothing surprising to it. The eccentricity of the language is only the reflection of the eccentricity of the matter.” [N.V.]

two points were further elaborated. The so-called second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s was characteristic of the Western sphere, which included West Germany. East Germany, the former GDR, went in a different ideological direction, and was not so affected by feminist language reform. Two diverging views on language and sex, a Western view from a feminist perspective and an Eastern view from a socialist perspective, will be discussed in the following sections.

4.4.1 West

Although the objective of Western feminism in the 1960s and 1970s was similar in different countries in which feminist organisations were active,⁷⁸ concrete exponents of their thinking engendered different ideas and actions with regards to language. In the Netherlands, neutralisation became a point of discussion in the 1970s (cf. Romein-Verschoor 1975), becoming politically endorsed in the 1980s. From a feminist perspective, this was a reaction to the idea that feminisation was the linguistic expression of the women as the “other” human being. The starting point of the feminist language reform movement in West Germany can be found in the USA. The role of gender stereotypes became one of the focal points of research in the cognitive sciences in the USA, because “traditional sex-role patterns were [found to be] in a state of flux” (Broverman et al. 1972: 60). From there, the focus rapidly shifted more specifically toward language (cf. Robin Lakoff’s (1973) influential article *Language and woman’s place*). A main point of study became the way in which linguistic material was interpreted, because on many levels of language, grammatically masculine forms were used in a generic way. In other words, it was studied if and how a) the MAN-principle takes over when there is no specific indication of a (female) person’s sex (Harrison 1975), and b) generically intended masculine forms, such as masculine pronouns or the use of *man* and *mankind*, were in fact understood generically on the cognitive level (Harrison & Passero 1975; Martyna 1978; Moulton et al. 1978; Silveira 1980; Moulton 1981).

⁷⁸As Kool-Smit (1967) voiced, feminist achievements in the previous decades had in theory opened the public domain to women, but the problem was that the corresponding attitudes toward women and their soci(et)al roles had largely remained the same. Hence, in practice, the situation had not greatly changed.

It is thus no coincidence that West German feminist language reform can be traced back to English studies. In 1978, the anglicist Senta Trömel-Plötz published the article *Linguistik und Frauensprache* ‘Linguistics and woman’s language’ (Trömel-Plötz 1978), in which the main topic was the generic use of masculine linguistic material. The article also contains proposals for non-sexist language use, avoiding neutralised non-feminised forms. Hartwig Kalverkämper’s response (Kalverkämper 1979a) set the tone for a discussion in which both parties by and large follow the same diverging lines of argumentation to date. Kalverkämper’s main argument is embedded in structural semantics. He compares PN pairs such as *Kunde-Kundin* ‘client.–F-client.F’ with the pair *Tag-Nacht* ‘day-night’ with regard to their differently marked semantic properties. As the noun *Tag* can be used in reference to the sum of day and night as the umbrella term, but *Nacht* only to the nightly part of the day, the noun *Tag* is semantically unmarked and, hence, generic (Kalverkämper 1979a: 59). Luise Pusch (in Pusch 1979) responded to Kalverkämper in defence of Trömel-Plötz in the same journal, *Linguistische Berichte*, to which Kalverkämper again responded (Kalverkämper 1979b) in a tone that was later described by Pusch (2021) as a “Stil von Mainsplaining”⁷⁹ *avant la lettre*. The linguistic debate around the (non-)genericity of masculine PNs was thus not only a linguistic matter – it became apparent from the very beginning that the tone was rather personal and that its contents, and especially (the criticism of) feminist language reform proposals, touched upon broader feminist objectives rather than just the meaning of single nouns. Next to the structuralist markedness argument, Kalverkämper introduces an important argument which is often repeated in defence of the “generic masculine”, namely:

Sie [Trömel-Plötz, N.V.] vermischt die außersprachliche Kategorie ‘Sexus’ mit der sprachlichen Kategorie ‘Genus’, indem sie von Gegebenheiten beim Genus auf Gegebenheiten des Sexus schließt. Dabei übersieht sie ganz, daß das Deutsche ja drei Genera besitzt; wäre das Neutrum (*das Mädchen, das Weib, das Fräulein* u.a.) mit in die Überlegung zu Maskulin und Feminin bzw. Mann und Frau einbezogen worden, hätte sich die Verlorenheit der Gedankengänge von selbst

⁷⁹“A style of mansplaining.” [N.V.]

entdeckt.⁸⁰

(Kalverkämper 1979a: 60)

The idea that (feminist) opponents of the generic use of masculine forms have simply not yet understood that grammatical gender exists completely independent of biological sex is repeated, as said above, quite often by proponents of its use (cf. among other well-represented linguists in German news media Eisenberg 2018, 2020; Wegener 2021). Grammatical gender deviations such as neuter *Mädchen* ‘girl’ and *Fräulein* ‘young lady, waitress’, as well as epicenes such as *die Koryphäe* ‘the expert.FEM’ and *der Star* ‘the star.MASC’ are often cited as proof for the fact that sex and gender are not related (cf. Wegener 2021). Still, they are well-studied subjects, which do not pose a problem to the gender-sex-principle (cf. Chapter 2).

Overall, feminisation in singular reference to women is rarely criticised. However, following the logic in this citation from Peter Eisenberg in an interview with *Deutschlandfunk*, feminisation does seem to be regarded as superfluous, even in female contexts:

[*Bäcker und Bäckerin/Arzt und Ärztin*] ist eine Redeweise, die ist grammatisch vollkommen in Ordnung. Sie ist von der Bedeutung her nicht vollkommen in Ordnung, weil die Frauen hier zweimal auftauchen. Mit *Bäcker* ist ja das Handwerk gemeint und alle Mitglieder dieses Handwerks. Da sind natürlich Männer und Frauen gemeint.⁸¹

(Eisenberg 2017)

While Kalverkämper was one of the first to introduce the structuralist argument in the dispute about gender-fair language use in the late 1970s, Doleschal (2002: 59) accredits

⁸⁰“She confuses the extralinguistic category ‘sex’ with the linguistic category ‘gender’ by mapping properties of gender onto properties of sex. She thereby overlooks completely that German has three genders; if the neuter (*das Mädchen, das Weib, das Fräulein*, among others) were taken into account in considerations about masculine and feminine, and man and woman, than the erroneous trains of thought would have been discovered automatically.” [N.V.]

⁸¹“[*Bäcker und Bäckerin/Arzt und Ärztin*] is a phrase which is grammatically completely fine. Semantically it is not completely fine, because women appear twice here. With *Bäcker* the trade [of a baker] is meant, and all members of this trade. Both men and women are meant here, naturally.” [N.V.]

the first mention of the generic masculine to Brinkmann (1962): “Im Verhältnis der beiden Varianten ist das Masculinum das Grundwort. Es nennt eigentlich nicht eine männliche Person, sondern (ohne Rücksicht auf das natürliche Geschlecht) allein das Subjekt eines Verhaltens”⁸² (Brinkmann 1962: 19-20). This perspective allows for the non-feminised PN to appear in every context, even with female referents. This principle was not described in grammars before the 20th century.

From the 1960s onwards, and with a clearly increasing frequency from the 1980s onwards, generically intended masculine forms are described in German grammars, both in the East and in the West (Doleschal 2015: 59-62). Crucially, however, grammarians never relate the genericity of masculine forms to female referents, but only to real generic (i.e., sex-unspecific) contexts. They discuss masculine plural forms, e.g., the example sentence “Die Freie Universität Berlin hat 62.000 Studenten”⁸³ in Hentschel & Weydt (1990: 148), or the masculine inflection of *jemand* ‘somebody’ and *niemand* ‘nobody’ in Drosdowski & Eisenberg (1995: 200). These inflationary descriptions of generic masculine forms are doubtlessly linked to their prominence in debates about language and sexism, provoking the necessity to provide a semantic description. It is certainly true that masculine forms are used in generic contexts, not only in the 20th century, but well before that (cf. also Trutkowski & Weiß 2023). In female contexts, however, feminisation seems to have been the historical default (Kopf 2023). According to Grebe (1966: 624), some professional nouns and titles are usually not feminised, even when the referent is female, e.g., *Schlosser* ‘locksmith.¬F’ and *Doktor* ‘doctor.¬F’. Other professional nouns, such as *Lehrerin* ‘teacher.F’, *Ärztin* ‘doctor.F’, *Schaffnerin* ‘conductor.F’ are unproblematically feminised, they further state.

That differentiation is the default in reference to women has some implications for further developments in gender-fair language use. It constitutes the basis for differentiation in non-binary contexts as well, because neutralisation of masculines in these contexts (as in Northern Dutch, for example), would then exclude women again. So-called third wave feminism is

⁸²“In the relationship between the two, the masculine is the basis. It actually does not name a male person, but (without recourse to biological sex) only the subject of a behaviour.” [N.V.]

⁸³“The Free University Berlin has 62.000 students.¬F.” [N.V.]

linked with intersectional feminism, which not only takes sex into focus, but also other identity aspects (ethnic origin, social gender, age, LGBTQIA+ affiliation etc.). It aims at deconstructing the idea of a binary biological sex constellation, which means for the linguistic binary constellation that this, too, is expanded. Differentiated forms (i.e., feminised forms) are additionally differentiated to include non-binary gender identities as well. Hence, so-called *gendern* ‘to gender.v’ has become a well-known term, pointing to the aforementioned use of diacritics – pronounced as a glottal stop – in feminised forms, between the masculine base and the feminising suffix *-in* (e.g., *Student:in* or *Student*in* ‘student’, among others). Studies have demonstrated that either this *Gendern*, or at least split forms (e.g., *Studenten und Studentinnen* ‘students. \neg F and students.F’), have become a widespread characteristic to avoid generic use of masculine forms in texts in many different domains, ranging from university guidelines (Acke 2019), over city websites (Müller-Spitzer & Ochs 2023) to the German president’s and chancellor’s News Year’s speeches (Müller-Spitzer, Rüdiger & Wolfer 2022). Such developments have certainly not contributed to a decreased use of feminising morphology in female contexts. In fact, Szczepaniak (2023: 181, 188) points to the indexical function of the suffix *-in*, as an indexical marker for the proneness of gender-fair language use in certain communities of practice, much like the aforementioned use of diacritics in “gendered” forms (Kotthoff 2017: 103-105; Kotthoff 2020: 121).⁸⁴ All in all, differentiation is mainly associated with feminist thinking (and action) in West Germany. Neutralisation as a means of gender-fair language use is mainly restricted to plural contexts; in singular contexts, when the referent is female, feminisation is mostly preferred. As western feminism did not play such a significant role in the GDR, it has been reported that the linguistic situation was somewhat different here.

⁸⁴An alternative to differentiation in plural contexts is the use of nominalised participles such as *Studierende* ‘students’, because they are not gender-marked. This is a neutralisation strategy, and the participle ending *-end* has been analysed as an indexical marker of gender-fair language use as well (Bülow & Harnisch 2015, 2017). By way of overgeneralisation, *-end* is sometimes extended onto singular contexts again, in which it is gender-marked, and where the masculine form is used, but still intended as gender-neutral. Because of this, (Harnisch 2016) concludes that the generic masculine is on the rise again.

4.4.2 East

It is commonly accepted that feminisation was less common in East Germany than it was in West Germany (Barz 1985; Gorny 1995; Trempelmann 1998; Sobotta 1997, 2000, 2002): “Die Frauen der DDR waren Kranführer, Maurer, Elektriker, Schlosser, Ingenieur oder Agrartechniker”⁸⁵ (Ross 2009). This different development is mostly attributed to the different ideological vision on feminisation in the GDR and the lack of a feminist movement that existed in West Germany. Gender equality was guaranteed in the GDR constitution from the outset. Art. 7 of the Constitution of the GDR from October 7, 1949, states:

Mann und Frau sind gleichberechtigt. Alle Gesetze und Bestimmungen, die der Gleichberechtigung der Frau entgegenstehen, sind aufgehoben.⁸⁶

Furthermore, with regards to equality on the job market, Art. 18 states:

Mann und Frau, Erwachsener und Jugendlicher haben bei gleicher Arbeit das Recht auf gleichen Lohn. Die Frau genießt besonderen Schutz im Arbeitsverhältnis. Durch Gesetz der Republik werden Einrichtungen geschaffen, die es gewährleisten, daß die Frau ihre Aufgabe als Bürgerin und Schaffende mit ihren Pflichten als Frau und Mutter vereinbaren kann.⁸⁷

The above Art. 18 of the GDR constitution is also embedded in the difficult economic reality of post-war Germany. Women were needed in the workforce, because so many men had died during the war (Fannrich-Lautenschläger 2014). This was naturally also true of West Germany, but while the FRG headed towards its “Wirtschaftswunder”, initial economic growth stagnated rapidly in the early 1950s in the GDR (for a discussion on the multiple factors contributing to this, cf. Ciesla 2002). The 1949 Constitution, regulating not only equal pay

⁸⁵“The women in the GDR were crane operators, masons, electricians, locksmiths, engineers or farm technicians.”

⁸⁶“Men and women are equal. Any laws and provisions opposing the equality of women [to men], are terminated.” [N.V.]

⁸⁷“Men and women, adults and adolescents, have the right to equal pay for equal labour. Employed women enjoy special protection. By the law of the Republic, equipment will be organised, which will enable her to compatibly fulfil her task as a citizen and employee with her duties as a wife and mother.” [N.V.]

but in fact the access to labour itself for women, had resulted more out of necessity than ideology: “Das Konzept von Gleichberechtigung war in SBZ [Sowjetische Besatzungszone] und DDR von Beginn an ein ökonomisches und nicht, wie im Nachhinein oft behauptet, ein emanzipatorisches”⁸⁸ (Ross 2009). The GDR economy was concentrated on heavy machinery (engineering) and metallurgy (Ciesla 2002) – this is reminiscent of the examples named above by Ross (2009) (*Kranführer* ‘crane operator.¬F’, *Elektriker* ‘electrician.¬F’ etc.). Barz (1985: 190) writes that according to 1983 GDR statistics, about 88% percent of women were employed. By 1989, over 90% of women were employed (MDR 2020).⁸⁹ While the division of outdoors labour between men and women was nearly 50/50 (Rudolph 1990: 476), the main difference between the sexes was found in the sectors in which they were employed: only about 17% of workers in the construction industry were women, while in healthcare and social services women were represented by 83% and 92%, respectively. Women were overrepresented in light industries and textile industry, as well as other parts of the job market, such as education and (textile) cleaning, where women represented about two thirds of employees (ibid.).

Art. 18 is characteristic of the view on women in the GDR, which combined the socialist equality ideal with the traditional view on the role of women in society. Women were not only labourers, but they were also wives and mothers. Household labour was thus a woman’s task, next to her civilian obligations toward the socialist state. In the 2020 MDR documentary on GDR women, a witness states that gender equality “ended on the doorstep” (Aehnlich 2020); once a woman had entered her home, her emancipated public role was replaced by her traditional role as a mother and housewife.⁹⁰ The information about employment rates and employment sectors of women will turn out to be relevant in analyzing linguistic data from the GDR in Chapter 6. In sum, GDR women fulfilled different roles than women in

⁸⁸“The concept of equality was economically motivated from the beginning, and it was not, as is often claimed in retrospect, emancipatory.” [N.V.]

⁸⁹By comparison, by 2020 about 75% of German women between 20 and 64 years old were employed in Germany (statistics retrievable via: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/198921/umfrage/erwerbstaetigenquote-in-deutschland-und-eu-nach-geschlecht/> [Accessed 19-10-2023]).

⁹⁰A woman in the GDR worked on average 93 hours per week, while a man worked about 59 hours on average (Gerlach 2017).

the FRG, and generally, different professional occupations were relevant to the GDR state as well. The ideological and political context that shaped the GDR's societal structure had a great influence on linguistic elements as well. Here, neutralisation comes into play.

Feminisation was subject to some metalinguistic discussion in the first decades of the existence of the GDR. In her analysis of this discussion, Sobotta (2002) finds that different sources assess the status quo differently. In his 1965 grammar, Wilhelm Schmidt postulates that feminisation is on the retreat, which he finds to be “eine Verarmung der Ausdruckskraft unserer Sprache”⁹¹ (Schmidt 1965: 95). He further states that it would be against the line of thinking of the GDR for a woman to “shamefully cover up that she is a woman” (Schmidt 1965: 96). Two years earlier, in 1963, the linguistic journal *Sprachpflege* concluded a six-year debate for and against feminisation with the summary that in general language use in reference to women, feminisation was the default. However, the journal also predicted that more speakers would come to accept generic masculine forms if it were officially documented that their use is not an expression of gender inequality (*Sprachpflege*, 8/1963, cit. Sobotta 2002: 152). A decade later, however, Schmidt argues in the same structuralist line as Brinkmann and Kalverkämper and simply states that masculine PNs are mere “role names”, which do not include sex information (Schmidt 1973: 100).

It is remarkable that the issue of feminisation in singular contexts with female referents was never discussed as problematic in the FRG. The generic use of masculine PNs in the FRG mostly concerns plural forms with referents of various sexes or genders, as well as generic reference in the singular (for unknown or true generic referents). Although official GDR documentation about feminisation and language policy is absent, neutralisation does follow the ideological standard of the GDR:

Nach der Lehre des Marxismus wurden feministische Denkansätze kategorisch mit der Behauptung abgelehnt, allein die marxistische Theorie weise den Weg zur wahren Emanzipation der Frau. Clara Zetkin, die wohl wichtigste Theoretikerin

⁹¹“an impoverishment of the expressiveness of our language” [N.V.]

der deutschen Sozialistinnen, lehnte in Übereinstimmung mit Marx und Engels jeglichen Geschlechterkampf zur Befreiung der Frau ab.⁹²

(Diehl 1992: 390)

It hereby becomes clear that the official gender-equality approach of the GDR followed the examples of socialist protagonists, and that feminist approaches known from its western neighbors were rejected on ideological grounds. Hence, titles and distinctions awarded by the state (e.g., *Held der Arbeit* ‘Hero.¬F of Labour’, *Verdienter Aktivist* ‘Deserved Activist.¬F’) only officially existed as generic masculines (Diehl 1992: 386). Official texts, such as newspapers, were also expected to contain more non-feminised forms than, for instance, literature. The latter constituted, as is often the case, a free space from official language use:

Im Bereich der Literatur vollzog sich daher in Abweichung von der Standardsprache ein zahlreiche kreative Formen umfassenden Sprachwandel hin zu einer expliziten Sichtbarmachung von Frauen bzw. des Weiblichen allgemein.⁹³

(Diehl 1992: 391)

Findings by Lutjeharms (1992) counter Diehl’s position. In the writings of the author Christa Wolf, Lutjeharms observes that the use of feminisation is in line with its prescribed use in GDR grammars. She refers to the grammar by Heidolph, Fläming & Motsch (1980: 575) who declare: “Movierte Formen werden nur verwendet, wenn der Aspekt “weiblich” betont werden muß [. . .].”⁹⁴ Wolf uses feminised forms according to this adage (Lutjeharms 1992: 122).

Some explorative studies have been conducted on the use of feminised and non-feminised PNs in official GDR texts. Sobotta (1997, 2000) investigates texts from the 1950s, 60s, and

⁹²“After marxist theory, feminist approaches were categorically rejected with the claim that only marxist theory could point the way to the true emancipation of woman. Clara Zetkin, arguably the most important theorist of German female socialists, rejected, like Marx and Engels, every battle of the sexes as a way of female liberation.” [N.V.]

⁹³“In the domain of literature a case of language change took place, contained numerous creative forms, by way of derogation from standard language. Its goal was the explicit visible-making of women and the female in general.” [N.V.]

⁹⁴“Feminised forms are only used when the aspect ‘female’ must be emphasised.” [N.V.]

80s from the daily newspaper *Freiheit*, published in the East German city of Köthen. The author concludes that both feminised and non-feminised forms are in use. Kopf (2023) concludes that feminisation in GDR newspapers in fact constituted an exception to an otherwise default use of feminisation in German historical data. Altogether, the situation regarding gender-fair language use in the GDR was less clearly inclined toward feminisation, and many authors have established that neutralisation was more common than in West Germany. Most of these findings are anecdotal or explorative, and a clear insight is still lacking.

4.5 Summary

Metalinguistic thought on the interplay of sex and gender is known already from the dawn of European writing, and it has taken a politically relevant stance throughout the centuries. In medieval times and in the first post-medieval centuries of grammar writing, feminisation itself was uniformly treated as the standard process to mark female sex in the Dutch and German language areas. Grammarians reflected on the semantics of the gender system and the idea that the male and female sexes are complementarily distributed over the masculine and feminine genders. Until the 20th century, there is no mention of masculine, non-feminised forms in reference to women: feminisation is undisputedly seen as the option available when talking about women and their occupations and functions. While some grammarians rigorously feminise any non-feminised PN in their example lists, others only feminise the PNs that denote functions which they regard as female occupations. While a recommendation for a consistent use of feminisation is not unexpected in German grammars, it also remains the default case in Dutch grammars until the late 19th century. Grammarians attempt to uphold a threefold gender system in Dutch, and feminisation is part of this. In the 20th century, this is no longer the case. In 20th-century German grammars, the so-called generic masculine is mentioned for the first time in the 1960s. Only a decade later, feminist language reform becomes relevant, not only in the German-speaking area, but also in the Dutch-speaking area, mainly in the Netherlands. Broadly speaking, there are two diverging lines of thought, namely one favouring neutralisation in the Netherlands (and less outspokenly in Flanders)

and reportedly in the former GDR, and one favouring differentiation in the FRG.

While the argument for differentiation in all investigated language areas is largely the same (women do not need to hide behind men or to be covered up), the neutralisation argument differs somewhat between the Dutch- and the German-speaking areas. German grammars (FRG and GDR) mainly focus on the supposed genericity of masculine forms, which in a structuralist sense denote roles and functions rather than human beings. Only in the GDR, but not in the FRG, is the argument brought to the fore that neutralisation can be an expression of equality in the sense that in that way, men and women belong linguistically as well as socially in the same category. FRG sources do not deliver this argumentation line of gender equality; rather, the focus is of a purely linguistic nature.⁹⁵ The social-equality argument was the main point of focus of feminist language reformers in the Netherlands as well. However, the Netherlands and the GDR differ in that the driving forces behind opting for neutralisation are not the same: feminism in the Netherlands comes in contrast to socialism and class struggle as a substitute for feminism in the GDR.

⁹⁵As stated above, arguments contra differentiation in the German-speaking area are still often only centred on language. The fact that there are apparently two different levels on which the debate takes place – one is purely linguistic, while the other sees linguistic change as a by-product of social change – may be the reason why arguments keep being repeated without any real consensus.

5 Feminisation: patterns and productivity

This chapter contains the first of three case studies in this book. The aim is to describe the feminisation system and the productivity of various patterns. This will provide a concrete basis for the case studies in the following chapters. The different feminisation patterns available to the language user will be described here, as well as the contexts in which they usually occur. It was argued in the previous chapters that feminisation is dependent on a number of factors, and that it is subject to many crosslinguistic differences. Chapter 3 provided an overview of Dutch and German feminisation systems (and their differentiation) with regards to their grammatical statuses. The three case studies in this book will concretise the theoretical premises set out in this overview. This first study brings formal aspects into particular focus, namely the first four listed in Table 3.1 in Section 3.2.1, into focus:⁹⁶

- a. Interaction of the base with the feminising morpheme (formal modification);
- b. Affix distribution;
- c. Phonological structure of the feminising morpheme;
- d. Transparency, i.e., allomorphy versus one productive suffix (crosslinguistically and diachronically);

Furthermore, while the second case study will focus on one text genre in particular, the scope of this first case study is broader, taking different text genres and registers into consideration. This is based on the idea that productivity degrees vary not only diachronically and crosslinguistically, but also on different levels of language use (cf. Section 3.2.2). Using data from various corpora, the productivity of feminisation as suffixation and compounding will therefore be diachronically and contrastively investigated in this chapter. While research on German feminisation is not new, quantitative research is lacking in Dutch. The German part of the study will draw from previous research on feminisation patterns, to which some new

⁹⁶The first two items are closely related, because affix distribution (when the feminising morpheme is in fact an affix) influences the form of the base.

data will be added. Koelmans (1978) and Mooijaart (1991) do offer an inventory of MD and MoD feminisation, but diachronic quantitative research is pending.

5.1 Corpus and data collection

For the purpose of this study, feminised PNs were collected from corpora. The OpenSoNaR corpus is suitable for Dutch. This is an heterogeneous and automatically tagged corpus, containing contemporary data from the first decade of the 21st century. It can be filtered by country (Netherlands and Belgium), and is divided into various subcorpora representing text genres. Three different subcorpora were used, representing different registers of language use, namely the Newspapers, the Tweets, and the Chats subcorpora. The Newspapers corpus was further subdivided into a Dutch and a Belgian corpus, as shown in Table 5.1. Nearly one third of newspaper data is Netherlandic Dutch, the rest is Belgian. The Tweets and Chats corpora are strongly unbalanced: the Tweets corpus is about 95% Dutch data, the Chats corpus contains about 95% Belgian data. Therefore, tweets are considered Netherlandic Dutch and chats are considered Flemish. Hence, there are two NL corpora, one containing standard language use (News) and one containing a mixture of formal and informal language use (Tweets), and there are two Belgian corpora, a formal one (News) and an informal one (Chats). Three different registers, with varying degrees of formal and standard language use (formal News > semi-formal Tweets > informal Chats), are thus represented.

SUBCORPUS	TOKENS	BE TOKENS	NL TOKENS
Newspapers	211.669.748	152.288.524	59.381.224
		71.9%	28.1%
Tweets	23.197.211	1.206.815	21.990.396
		5.2%	94.8%
Chats	11.873.434	11.135.773	737.661
		93.8%	6.2%

Table 5.1: OpenSoNaR subcorpora: number of tokens in each subcorpus, relative share of BE and NL data in each subcorpus.

Because PNs following different feminisation patterns were collected from these corpora,

and because they are pos-tagged, the search query was “[word=“.*S” & pos = “NOU”]”, whereby S is a variable feminising suffix (e.g., *-ster*, *-es*, in the search query thus as “.*ster”, “.*es” etc.). Hence, because of the fact that suffixes were searched for, the search was restricted to word forms, not lemmas. Relevant data had to be manually singled out, and because the result lists were very long in each case, this was not done over for plural forms. All results for every pattern thus only contain suffixed nouns in the singular. Since the search yielded over 110.000 different tokens and nearly 1.200 types – amply sufficient for a detailed analysis – an additional search for plural forms was not carried out. The results were subsequently filtered by word form and downloaded from the corpora in frequency lists. Due to this, the downloaded lists do not contain KWICs, only keywords. SoNaR data was tested against data from two Middle Dutch corpora, namely the *Corpus Gysseling* and the *Corpus Middelnederlands* (cf. Table 5.2). The search and download processes were the same as in the SoNaR corpus.

CORPUS	TOKENS	PERIOD	TEXT GENRES
Corpus Gysseling (CG)	1.547.893	1200-1300	Fiction, official texts
Corpus Middelnederlands (CMN)	10.521.505	1300-1550	Rhyme texts, prose texts

Table 5.2: Middle Dutch corpora.

Together, these three corpora cover the whole Middle Dutch period and a range of different text genres.

German feminisation patterns, especially *-in*, have been rather well investigated. For some additional contemporary data, focusing on patterns other than *-in*, the DWDS *Kernkorpus* was used, as well as the *Referenzkorpus Mittelhochdeutsch* (ReM) for MHG historical data. The DWDS *Kernkorpus* is somewhat comparable to the Dutch SoNaR corpus in that it contains various text genres, and both contain data from comparable time periods: the *Kernkorpus 21* contains data from 2000-2010. Data from the *Kernkorpus* (20th century) was added to this because the *Kernkorpus 21* is not a very large corpus. As for the Dutch corpus, the search was restricted to word forms: “*S with \$p=@NN”, whereby S is a variable suffix. Token counts in the *Kernkorpus*, both parts, can be found below.

CORPUS	TOKENS	PERIOD
ReM	2.470.517	1050-1350
Kernkorpus	121.494.429	1900-1999
Kernkorpus 21	15.469.000	2000-2010

Table 5.3: Contemporary German corpora.

Both German corpora contain fiction texts, as well as non-fiction texts (functional literature, scientific literature, newspapers). Fig. 5.1 shows the distribution of text types in the *Kernkorpus* (1900-2010).

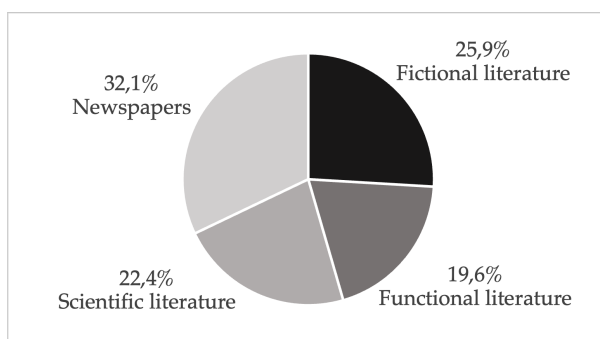


Figure 5.1: Text types in the *Kernkorpus*.

The study will focus on token and type counts. In terms of suffixation, a suffixed form can occur as a compositional head in a compound (e.g., *krantlezeres* ‘newspaper reader.F’). Only heads are counted as types, not the compound itself. This is because the focus lies on the different options available for each feminisation pattern. Clearly lexicalised units, which occur as lemmas in dictionaries, such as *woordvoerster* ‘spokesperson.F’ (semantically different from the verbal base *voer-* ‘carry’), are counted as types as well. Due to their diverse spellings, MD and MHG forms are transcribed into their modern versions in tabular overviews, but evidently not in example sentences. To compare token and type counts, the ratio of tokens and types per million tokens in a corpus will sometimes be relevant. This value is abbreviated as x PMT, whereby x is the variable token or type count.

5.2 Feminisation patterns in Dutch

Dutch feminising morphology is characterised by its allomorphy. There is range of feminising affixes and other word-formation patterns, all competing to saturate the same onomasiological market (cf. Baayen 2009: 906). Whereas suffixation is the main rule, and allomorphy appears mainly in this domain, compounding is also in use as a feminising word-formation process in Dutch.

5.2.1 Derivation

Derivational suffixes in Dutch are a complex matter because of the large set of allomorphs they form part of, as well as their irregular use which appears complex at first sight. The main Dutch feminising suffixes are (cf. de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 50-60; Booij 2022b: 12.4.2.2.6):

(40) *ster; -e; -es(se); -in; -erse; -egge, -se, -nede, -a, -trice, -ette*

It is well known that these are not all equally productive, nor are they all native suffixes or even supraregionally distributed within the Dutch-speaking area. Some of these suffixes (*-a, -euse, -trice*) only form part of Romance loan words, and have no productivity degree of their own in Dutch. Others (*-erse, -egge, -se*) are regionally restricted. This category of ‘residual’ suffixes will be discussed later on in Section 5.2.1.6. Finally, *-ette* is a diminutive that has come to serve as a feminising suffix not only in Dutch, but also in English (cf. Kornexl 2008), and will be in focus in Section 5.2.1.8. It was outlined in Chapter 4 that throughout the history of Dutch grammar writing, four feminising suffixes are recurrently mentioned, and these suffixes are not geographically restricted: *-ster, -e, -in, -es(se)*. The following sections will deal with the productivity of these four patterns from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective.

5.2.1.1 *-ster* The suffix *-ster* is native Germanic. Etymologically it has been reconstructed to go back to three allomorphs: **-istrijō/-astrijō/-ustrijō*. In PGM, they transparently consist of two elements: the first, **-stra-*, derived instrumental and action nouns from

verbs, the second, **-jō*, was added to it as a feminising agentive suffix (Kluge 1899: §48-49; Barnhart 1988: 1066; Davis 1992: 107). After these suffixes had been formally reanalysed as one, the resulting suffix came to bear the conjoined functional and semantic properties of both parts, namely a) deriving nouns from action verbs, and b) adding the property of agency and femininity to the noun. The suffix contains schwa and is thus not stressed in MoD, e.g., *wandelaarster* [*wandəˌlaːrstər*]. *-ster* exists not only in Dutch but was well known in Old English as *-estre*, too. According to von Lindheim (1958: 485f.), however, OE *-estre* was restricted to West Saxonian and only became productive later, around 1300, as a feminising suffix in the Anglian area. It shares the interchangeability of the masculine agentive ending *-er* with Dutch, deriving nouns from action verbs as well. This is particularly interesting, since rather than being added to a masculine stem, as other feminising suffixes are, *-ster* mostly substitutes it:

We thus find various examples in which *-ere* and *-estre* existed parallel to one another in pairs of masculine and feminine agent nouns, such as OE *bacere* ‘baker’ and *bæcestre* ‘baker woman’, *sangere* ‘singer’ and *sangestre* ‘singer woman’, *þenere* ‘servant’ and *þenestre* ‘servant woman’, *webbere* ‘weaver’ and *webbestre* ‘weaver woman’ etc. A similar pattern also occurred in Middle Dutch in such pairs as *leraar* ‘teacher’ (*-aar* < PGmc, **-ārjaz*) and *lerster* ‘teacher woman’ (*-ster* < **astrijō*).

(Davis 1992: 107f.)

Although substitution is presented here as the default case, it is only one of two derivational patterns to which *-ster* belongs (van Santen & de Vries 1981). First, formations such as *wandelaarster* ‘wanderer.F, stroller.F’ and *herbergierster* ‘innkeeper.F’ are derived from masculines in *-aar* and *-ier*. They occur whenever the verbal base ends in *-elen*, *-enen*, or *-eren* (Koelmans 1978: 65), e.g., *wandelen* ‘stroll’ → *wandelaar* ‘stroller.−F’ → *wandelaar-ster* ‘stroller.F’. Second, formations such as *speelster* ‘player.F’ and *vrijwilligster* ‘volunteer.F’ are directly derived from various bases, including nouns, adjectives, and numerals. The latter are semantically equal to the former (*-ster* ads the semantic feature of femininity to the

base) but they differ formally in that they do not obtain an extra suffix through derivation. Rather, a different suffix is added to the base which substitutes the masculine suffix *-(d)er* (van Santen & de Vries 1981: 117f.). These feminised formations nevertheless underlie the same word formation restrictions as their non-derived bases in *-(d)er*. Wherever *-(d)er*-formations are possible, *-ster* can occur too. Whenever there is an irregular formation in *-(d)er*, the formation in *-ster* is irregular as well: *voorganger* ‘precedent.¬F’ and *voorgangster* ‘precedent.F’ from *voorgaan* ‘precede’; *reiziger* ‘traveller.¬F’ and *reizigster* ‘traveller.F’ from *reizen* ‘travel’; *doener* ‘doer.¬F’ and *doenster* ‘doer.F’ from *doen* ‘do’ (van Santen & de Vries 1981: 118).

Van Marle (1984: Ch.8) attempts to unite rule- and analogy-based word formation processes in the behaviour of *-ster*. The idea is that regular *ster*-formations are the result of derivational rules, a “direct pattern of coining” (van Marle 1984: 276), whereas irregular formations must be the result of analogical coining. In the first case, a derivational pattern simply needs a base to which an affix is then directly added. Van Marle therefore allocates nouns such as *herbergierster* ‘innkeeper.F’ and *vrijwilligster* ‘volunteer.F’ to the derivational domain. In the case of *vrijwilligster*, it is noted that not only the feminised form, but also the masculine *vrijwilliger* ‘volunteer.¬F’ is coined through a regular derivational process:

For, the base of this relationship need only be specified on the level of word-classes, while its formal reflex is affix-addition. [...] Both categories [-*er* and *-ster*, N.V.] have identical derivational domains.

(van Marle 1984: 276)

-ster in *vrijwilligster* ‘volunteer.F’ seemingly substitutes masculine *-er* in *vrijwilliger* ‘volunteer.F’, yet in reality it is the result of derivation from the same base. Analogical coining, on the other hand, is an indirect way of forming new words, which assumes the existence of a form that serves as a template for another one. We can recall that the idiosyncratic properties of *reiziger* ‘traveller.¬F’, as mentioned above, also apply to its feminine counterpart *reizigster* ‘traveller.F’. *Reizigster* is not directly derived from a verb, since the form

differs from verbal derivatives such as *werkster* ‘worker.F’, which have the verbal stem (in this case, *werk-*) as their derivational base. For *reizigster*, the verbal stem is not *reizig-* but *reis-*, although only the former functions as the derivational base. Hence, the feminine form can only exist with the precondition that there is already a masculine with the same stem. Van Marle calls this principle Royen’s Law, in honour of Gerlach Royen: Analogical coining in *-ster* is restricted to the class of actual (i.e. ‘existing’) personal names in *-er* or *-der* (van Marle 1984: 277). As pointed out before (cf. Section 3.2.2), it is maintained here that each new formation is analogy-based, and thus – as opposed to van Marle’s (1984) suggestion – both regular and irregular new *ster*-formations are seen as the result of analogical coining, rather than rule-based word formation.

In some cases, *-ster* receives competition from other suffixes, notably *-e* and *-es*. As will be shown below, a corpus analysis of the occurrence of feminising morphology in modern Dutch illustrates this suffix competition. Van Santen & de Vries (1981: 122) mention *scholiere* ‘student.F, pupil.F’ as an alternative to *scholierster* in dictionaries. This can be explained by the preference of *-e* for loan words (feminine *scholiere* might have been adopted from French in its entirety), in competition with *-ster*, which is usually added to the ending *-ier*. Competition from *-es* is seen in *bedelares* versus *bedelaarster* ‘beggar.F’, for instance. Since *-ster* is a Germanic suffix, present in Old English too, it should be represented in the earliest stages of Dutch. Mooijaart (1991) does not find the suffix in her corpus analysis of Middle Dutch before the 14th century. In her analysis *-ster* only occurs in tautological feminising forms, consisting of the combination of *-ster* with *-igge* [-*egge*], for instance in *scoenewerksterigge* ‘shoemaker.F’ (Mooijaart 1991: 197). In the CG, however, the form *voedster* ‘wet nurse’ occurs three times, among others as a translation from Latin:

(41) *nutrix - uvstre* (Glossarium Bernense 261, 24)

-ster gains ground in the 15th century. In the MD corpora, 242 tokens (20,1 PMT) were found ending in feminising *-ster*, in 29 different types (2.4 PMT). The most common are the following ten⁹⁷ nouns, accounting for 202 tokens or 83.5% of all tokens in *-ster*:

⁹⁷Each table for each different pattern will contain ten items, unless otherwise determined.

	TYPE		f_{TOKEN}
1.	<i>voedster</i>	‘wet nurse’	91
2.	<i>helpster</i>	‘helper.F’	31
3.	<i>voorspreekster</i>	‘spokeswoman, advocate.F, defender.F’	17
4.	<i>dienster</i>	‘(house)maid’	15
5.	<i>kluizenaarster</i>	‘hermit, recluse.F’	10
6.	<i>bewaarster</i>	‘keeper.F’	10
7.	<i>patroonster</i>	‘patroness’	8
8.	<i>beschermster</i>	‘protector.F’	7
9.	<i>overspeelster</i>	‘adulteress’	7
10.	<i>voorbidster</i>	‘intercessor.F’	6
	SUM		202

Table 5.4: Token frequencies (f) of types in *-ster* in Middle Dutch.

According to Mooijaart (1991: 197f.), *-ster* became productive in the 15th and 16th centuries, especially in the North-Brabantic area. The semantics of MD *ster*-formations are quite straightforward: we mainly encounter household vocabulary and terms for women in religious roles, i.e., agentive roles reserved for women, which we are likely to find in medieval texts in which women occur. Moreover, we can find multiple evaluative and pejorative formations linked to sexuality: *overspeelster* ‘adulterer.F’, *bedriegster* ‘fraud.F, cheat.F, adulterer.F’, *spinster* ‘spinster’, *vrijster* ‘spinster’, *versmaadster* ‘disobliging woman’.

Whereas *-ster* became reanalysed as a neutral agentive suffix in English (e.g., in *gangster*, *gamester*, cf. von Lindheim 1958: 496), it is undisputedly the most productive feminising suffix in Modern Dutch. The SoNaR corpus reveals the following results for the occurrence of this feminising suffix:

<i>-ster</i>	NEWSPAPERS		TWEETS	CHATS	SUM
	BE	NL	NL	BE	
f_{TOKEN}	39.601	18.588	1.219	956	60.364
PMT	260,0	313,0	52,5	80,5	244,6
f_{TYPE}	428	371	173	141	676
PMT	2,8	6,2	7,4	11,8	2,7

Table 5.5: *-ster*: token and type frequencies in Modern Dutch.

The ten most frequent forms (types) ending in the feminising suffix *-ster* in Dutch, as they occur in the SoNaR corpus with all subcorpora taken together, are listed in Table 5.6.

	TYPE		f_{TOKEN}
1.	<i>speelster</i>	‘player.F’	5.967
2.	<i>woordvoester</i>	‘spokeswoman’	5.462
3.	<i>-geefster</i>	‘giver.F’	3.763
4.	<i>schrijfster</i>	‘writer.F’	3.251
5.	<i>medewerkster</i>	‘employee.F’	2.310
6.	<i>voorzitster</i>	‘chairwoman’	2.254
7.	<i>bewoonster</i>	‘inhabitant.F’	2.252
8.	<i>verpleegster</i>	‘nurse’	2.224
9.	<i>bestuurster</i>	‘driver.F’	2.158
10.	<i>uitbaatster</i>	‘manager.F’	1.706
	SUM		31.357

Table 5.6: Token frequencies of types in *-ster* in Modern Dutch.

The total token frequency of these ten feminised PNs (31.357 tokens) accounts for 51.9% of the total token count of PNs ending in feminising *-ster*. About half of all other tokens ending in *-ster* are thus spread over a quite large number of different types, namely the remaining 666, of which many are low-frequency forms. This points to high productivity: “productive categories are characterised by the presence of large numbers of low-frequency forms” (Baayen 2009: 904, and cf. Section 3.2.2). The realised productivity of *-ster* is not only synchronically high compared to that of other feminising suffixes, but it has risen diachronically as well. Token counts (PM) have strongly increased over time, and type counts have slightly increased. Importantly, as the data in the table above demonstrates, smaller corpora tend to have higher relative type counts. Hence, the lower relative type count of forms in *-ster* in the smaller MD corpus (ca. 12 million tokens) also points to a lower productivity degree of the pattern. The rise in the productivity of *-ster* may be indebted to sociocultural changes. Since *ster*-derivates are semantically [+agentive] by default, the number of formations may have been boosted through increasing access to public life and hence a more diverse spectrum of agentive nouns to denote women. Moreover, female protagonists in medieval literary

and official texts are scarce and mainly fulfil the same role. Chivalric romance, for example, centred around royal protagonists. The suffix associated with these forms is *-in*, as will be discussed below.

Next to *-e*, it is the most productive feminising category in contemporary Dutch, presumably due to its wide regional spread and its interchangeability with the highly frequent masculine suffix *-er*. Because the default domain of *ster*-derivates is that of agency, a majority is derived from verbs. Hence, *-ster* forms agentive nouns from mainly verbal bases, but may combine with adjectival and other bases as well. In this capacity, it has a wide range of bases to attach to, which may further explain its productivity.

5.2.1.2 -e The distribution of *-e* is quite straightforward: apart from native Dutch nouns ending in *-genoot*, *-genaam*, *-verwant*, and *-ling*,⁹⁸ it attaches to masculine loan suffixes like *-ist*, *-ent*, *-loog*, and *-graaf*. Because *-e* is a schwa, it is naturally not stressed, e.g. *psychologe* [psɪçɔ'lo:yə]. According to Koelmans (1978: 61), feminising *-e* was likely already in use in Middle Dutch, but due to incomplete apocope of *-e* in masculines through deflexion, it is hard to find unambiguous instances of it as a feminising suffix:

Het Middelnederlands leverde al een *genotinne* op, waarbij aangetekend mag worden dat een vrouwelijk *genote* weinig kans had zolang de manlijke pendant z'n slot-*e* nog niet definitief had verloren.⁹⁹

(Koelmans 1978: 59)

Thus, in Koelmans' example *genotinne*, there is a clear female marker, but it is not *-e* – schwa is part of the MD form *-inne*. The now-feminine *genote* 'companion.F' was a masculine noun in MD. Mooijaart (1991: 200) considers the attachment of *-e* to the native suffix *-ling*, as well as the forms *-genote* 'companion.F' and *-verwante* 'relative.F' to be the main factors contributing to the expansion of feminising *-e* in the 19th century. As outlined in Chapter

⁹⁸These were formed primarily in the 19th century, according to grammarians at the time, cf. Section 4.3.

⁹⁹“Middle Dutch had *genotinne*, though it should be noted that a feminine *genote* had little chance so long as the masculine counterpart had not yet lost its ending *-e*.” [N.V.]

4, grammarians had become aware of the expansion of *-e* during this time, and the nouns to which it attaches were considered epicene by most of them (de Vries & te Winkel 1866: XIV; de Groot 1873: 145-146, §157). All other instances of *-e* are, as mentioned above, part of loan words from Greek and Romance (either directly from French, or with French serving as the intermediary language between Latin and Dutch). Thus, the operational domain of *-e* only stretches as far as the inventory of Romance and Greek loan words containing masculine loan suffixes. *-e* shows no signs of productivity outside of this non-native domain. The most frequent PN in *-e*, *genote*, almost never occurs as a simplex, but rather seems to have obtained a suffixoid status. The semantic bleaching process of lexical items turning affixes in turn helps expand its use. Instances with *-genote* include *echtgenote* ‘life companion.F, wife’ (as the most frequent one), *lotgenote* ‘companion.F of fate’, and *flatgenote* ‘housemate.F’. *Genote* in these contexts always has the meaning ‘companion.F, someone who shares something with someone’. Types and tokens in *-e* are found in the corpora as shown in Table 5.7, with the ten most frequent types listed in Tabel 5.8.

<i>-e</i>	NEWSPAPERS		TWEETS	CHATS	SUM
	BE	NL	NL	BE	
f_{TOKEN}	22.211	6.356	747	501	29.815
PMT	145,8	107,0	32,2	42,2	120,8
f_{TYPE}	287	237	90	57	388
PMT	1,9	4,0	3,8	4,8	1,6

Table 5.7: *-e*: token and type frequencies in Modern Dutch.

	TYPE		f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>-genote</i>	‘companion.F’	9.187
2.	<i>studente</i>	‘student.F’	2.463
3.	<i>journaliste</i>	‘journalist.F’	1.668
4.	<i>advocate</i>	‘lawyer.F’	1.656
5.	<i>kandidate</i>	‘candidate.F’	1.422
6.	<i>assistente</i>	‘assistant.F’	802
7.	<i>correspondente</i>	‘correspondent.F’	624
8.	<i>fotografe</i>	‘photographer.F’	616
9.	<i>patiënte</i>	‘patient.F’	611
10.	<i>agente</i>	‘agent.F’	582
	SUM		19.631

Table 5.8: Token frequencies of types in *-e* in Modern Dutch.

The tokens corresponding to these ten different types comprise 65.8% of all tokens ending in *-e*. Thus, 34.2% of remaining tokens correspond to the 378 remaining types, which in turn points to a productivity which is not quite as high as that of *-ster*. In fact, *-ster* and *-e* seem to be neatly distributed over two domains, namely the native for *-ster*, and the non-native for *-e*. While *-ster* is an agentive suffix, *-e* mainly occurs in non-agentive nouns and profession nouns. As is to be expected from Latin loans, many of which entered Dutch after the medieval period, they mostly centre on academic and scientific vocabulary: further examples are *advocaat* ‘lawyer.→F, advocate.→F’ (first attested in 1559), *theoloog* ‘theologist.→F’ (in 1656), *docent* ‘teacher.→F’ (in 1864), *diplomaat* ‘diplomat.→F’ (in 1878).¹⁰⁰ At the point of borrowing, they were not yet feminised.

5.2.1.3 -es(se) Much like English *-ess*, the Dutch suffix *-esse* and its phonologically eroded counterpart *-es* are loan suffixes from French. It became an active suffix in Dutch under the influence of French loanwords, but has almost no productivity in modern Dutch (Philippa et al. 2003).¹⁰¹ It does not contain schwa, and *-es* is stressed, e.g., *danseres* [dansə'res]. Middle Dutch corpora contain 153 tokens (12.7 PMT) ending in feminising

¹⁰⁰INT dictionary: <https://gtb.ivdnt.org/search/> [Accessed 31.05.2023].

¹⁰¹<https://etymologiebank.nl/trefwoord/es4> [Accessed 01-12-2022].

-esse, which was not yet shortened to *-es*. Twelve types (1.0 PMT) correspond to these tokens, as listed in Table 5.9. In *toveresse*, *voorsprekeresse*, and *zondaresse*, the suffix *-ster* would be expected from a formal perspective, as it is the default pattern to substitute or be added to masculine agentive *-aar* and *-er*. Nevertheless, Modern Dutch *tovenares* and *zondares* both still contain *-es* and are not feminised by *-ster*.

TYPE			f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>prinsesse</i>	‘princess’	68
2.	<i>abdesse</i>	‘abbess’	33
3.	<i>profetesse</i>	‘prophet.F’	18
4.	<i>prioresse</i>	‘prioress’	10
5.	<i>meesteresse</i>	‘master.F’	9
6.	<i>toveresse</i>	‘sorcerer.F’	5
7.	<i>doctoresse</i>	‘doctor.F’	2
8.	<i>louweresse</i>	‘laurel.F’	1
9.	<i>prelatesse</i>	‘prelate.F’	1
10.	<i>voorsprekeresse</i>	‘advocate.F’	1
11.	<i>zondaresse</i>	‘sinner.F’	1
12.	<i>jacobinesse</i>	‘jacobess’	1
SUM			153

Table 5.9: Token frequencies of types in *-esse* in Middle Dutch.

While *-esse* is now restricted to nine different types in the whole of the Dutch corpus,¹⁰² reduced *-es* has a larger operational area.

<i>-esse</i>	NEWSPAPERS		TWEETS	CHATS	SUM
	BE	NL	NL	BE	
f _{TOKEN}	790	791	141	501	2.223
PMT	5,2	13,3	6,1	42,4	9,0
f _{TYPE}	6	6	6	6	9
PMT	0,03	0,1	0,3	0,5	0,03

Table 5.10: *-esse*: token and type frequencies in Modern Dutch.

¹⁰²The corpus contains two more types, namely *duchesse* and *princesse*. However, these types are all occurrences of French proper names which include a royal title. They were therefore left out of the analysis.

-esse occurs in the SoNaR corpus in types listed in Table 5.11. However, in the case of *eigenaresse* and *dienaresse*, it is not quite clear whether the suffix is non-eroded *-esse*, or a so-called stacked suffix, consisting of both *-es* and *-e*.

TYPE		f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>secretaresse</i> ‘secretary.F’	1.718
2.	<i>maîtresse</i> ‘mistress’	295
3.	<i>eigenaresse</i> ‘owner.F’	133
4.	<i>bibliothecaresse</i> ‘librarian.F’	69
5.	<i>baronesse</i> ‘baroness’	3
6.	<i>jubilarresse</i> ‘jubilee.F’	2
7.	<i>dienaresse</i> ‘servant.F’	1
8.	<i>musketieresse</i> ‘musketeer.F’	1
9.	<i>functionaresse</i> ‘functionary.F’	1
SUM		2.223

Table 5.11: Token frequencies (f) of types in *-esse* in Modern Dutch.

Apart from *secretaresse* and *maîtresse*, all of these types usually occur in their shortened form with *-es*, or they are occasionalisms, like *musketieresse* and *functionaresse*. *-esse* appears in lexicalised items which differ semantically from their masculine counterparts, i.e., the suffix does not merely add the semantic feature [female] to its derivational base. *Secretaresse* ‘secretary, bookkeeper.F’ signifies a different occupation than *secretaris* ‘secretary (of state)’. Therefore, when referring to a female secretary of state, the PN will also be *secretaris*, since this is the noun denoting this specific occupation. *Maîtresse* behaves in the same way as English *mistress*, usually denoting an unfaithful woman rather than the [female] counterpart of *mister* (Dutch *maître*). The main distinction between these feminines and their masculine counterparts is the expression of status, with the masculine forms denoting a higher-status occupation.

As shown in Table 5.12 below, there are 68 different types ending in *-es* in the SoNaR corpus, the then most frequent of which are listed in Table 5.13.

<i>-es</i>	NEWSPAPERS		TWEETS	CHATS	SUM
	BE	NL	NL	BE	
f_{TOKEN}	13.551	7.656	717	468	22.392
PMT	89,0	128,9	30,9	39,4	90,8
f_{TYPE}	51	44	25	21	68
PMT	0,3	0,7	1,1	1,8	0,3

Table 5.12: *-es*: token and type frequencies in Modern Dutch.

	TYPE		F_{token}
1.	<i>prinses</i>	‘princess’	6.639
2.	<i>zangeres</i>	‘singer.F’	6.055
3.	<i>lerares</i>	‘teacher.F’	1.706
4.	<i>winnares</i>	‘winner.F’	1.638
5.	<i>danseres</i>	‘dancer.F’	1.213
6.	<i>kunstenares</i>	‘artist.F’	1.075
7.	<i>eigenares</i>	‘owner.F’	800
8.	<i>minnares</i>	‘lover.F’	742
9.	<i>onderwijzeres</i>	‘teacher.F’	435
10.	<i>dichteres</i>	‘poet.F’	389
	SUM		20.692

Table 5.13: Token frequencies (f) of types in *-es* in Modern Dutch.

The ten types with the highest token values in which *-es* occurs comprise the vast majority of all occurrences of *-es*. 20.692 tokens equal 93% of all tokens ending in *-es* in the corpus. As only a few types have a high token frequency, with only few remaining lower-frequency types, this points to low productivity. *-es* and *-in* are alike in that they both usually occur in PNs which, when denoting women, are (almost) never used as masculines, as in the case of *prinses* ‘princess’ and *zangeres* ‘singer.F’. Thus, nouns such as *prins* ‘prince’, *zanger* ‘singer.¬F’, *leraar* ‘teacher.¬F’ have little generic potential. This implies that during lexicalisation, [+female] semantics have become a lexically determined feature of these PNs. Such forms are rather old, which, together with the low productivity of the suffixes they contain, explains their higher lexicalisation degree. As shown in the table above, *-es* can be

added to a PN in *-er* or *-aar*, which is reminiscent of the contexts in which *-ster* occurs. The latter substitutes *-er* and is added to *-aar*, as well. It seems that the two suffixes are each other's competitors, although the native suffix *-ster* has diachronically oppressed non-native *-es*.

5.2.1.4 -in One of the oldest feminising suffixes in Dutch is *-in*, which was inherited from Proto-Germanic. It originated as the Germanic morpheme combination of masculine *n*-stems with **-jo*, resulting in the suffixes **-injo* and **-unjo* (Kluge 1899: §39). We have already encountered the latter, **-jo*, in the etymology of *-ster*, where it also served as a feminising suffix. Hence, *-in* attached to masculine bases from its origin, and it has retained this characteristic to date. The OE cognate of *-in* was *-en*, e.g., in *gyden* 'goddess' and *elfen* 'elf', next to quite a few animal names such as *wylfen* 'wolf' and *fixen* 'fox' (von Lindheim 1958: 481). However, most formations in *-en* vanished early on from English, save for the lexicalised, pejorative form *vixen*, which still contains female semantics. Although *-in* is attenuated in both English and German, in Dutch it remains stressed, e.g., *koningin* [kon'ɪŋm]. The suffix is still transparently intact in Dutch and especially German. In light of its productivity in German, and its waning productivity in Dutch, the suffix deserves some special attention in this section.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the 19th-century grammarian de Groot (1873: 145-146, §157) categorises *-in* as exclusively onymic, which contradicts the 19th-century reality of *-in*. Many of the types in *-in*, both in MD and in Modern Dutch, are feminised royal titles (*koningin* 'queen', *gravin* 'countess' etc.). The original onymic use is still transparent in these PNs. Mooijaart (1991: 199) notes that onymic use of other feminising suffixes does occur as well,¹⁰³ albeit only rarely. Moreover, *-in* as an onymic marker had become a rarity by the 17th century; it was far from the default use of the suffix in the 19th century. The MD corpus contains 5.380 tokens (445.7 PMT) in *-inne* (Middle Dutch *-in*), corresponding to 100 different types (8.3 PMT). With 5.095 *in*-formations, the CMN contains the lion's share of these tokens. Of these types, 32 are feminised proper names such as *Bloemaardin* 'wife of Bloemaard', i.e.,

¹⁰³Regionally restricted *-erse*, for example, can also be used onymically.

unambiguous instances of onymic use of *-in*.

	TYPE		f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>koningin</i>	‘queen’	2686
2.	<i>keizerin</i>	‘empress’	558
3.	<i>vriendin</i>	‘friend.F’	408
4.	<i>hertogin</i>	‘duchess’	373
5.	<i>gravin</i>	‘countess’	268
6.	<i>godin</i>	‘goddess’	148
7.	<i>ezelin</i>	‘donkey.F’	103
8.	<i>jodin</i>	‘jewish woman’	103
9.	<i>gezellin</i>	‘companion.F’	100
10.	<i>waardin</i>	‘innkeeper.F’	88
	SUM		4835

Table 5.14: Token frequencies of types in *-in* in Middle Dutch.

The following instances from the early 16th century, as found in the CMN, demonstrate that Middle Dutch and Early New Dutch feminised royal titles are still often used onymically:

- (42) Hier voertijts woende een rijck ende machtich man in Inghelant ende was **grave** here earstwhile lived a rich and powerful man in England and was count van Beverley welcke **grave** wedewaer was. want **sijn gravinne** ghestorven was. of Beverley which count widower was because his countess died had ‘Here in England used to live a rich and powerful man, and he was the Count of Beverley. This count was a widower, because his countess had died.’

(*Historie van Jan van Beverley*, ca. 1500-1520 [BEVERLEY])

- (43) Met dese woorden soe is die coopman ghecomen in die stadt van lymborch hi with these words so has the merchant come in the city of Limburg he ginc te hove omte spreken den **hertoghe** ende die **hertoghinne** **sijn wijf** went to court to speak.to the duke and the duchess his wife ‘With these words the merchant came into the city of Limburg; he went to court to speak to the Duke and to his wife the Duchess.’

(*Die schoone hystorie van Margrieten*, 1516 [MARGRIET])

- (44) Ende doe den dienst gedaen was. doe ghinghen sy ontbyten ende goede
 and when the service done was then went they have.breakfast and good
 chiere maken / Die **keyser** ende die **keiserinne des keisers**
 fun make / the emperor and the empress the.GEN emperor.GEN
docffhter.
 daughter

‘And when the service was over, they went to have breakfast and some fun, the Emperor and the Empress, the daughter of the Emperor.’

(*Die schoone hystorie van Margrieten*, 1516 [MARGRIET])

That royal titles are overrepresented on the token level may be connected with medieval literature: female characters which occur in medieval literary texts – the most prominent medieval genre being chivalric romance – are most often noblewomen.

Onymic *in*-forms with proper names are found predominantly in the CG, and it should be noted that the majority are found in one text, an Antwerp obituary. By the 14th century, only one instance of a feminised proper name is attested:

- (45) Hoort wat desen Otten ghevel / an sinen wive der **Lumbaerdinne** /
 hear what this Otto happened / on his wife the Lumbaerdin /
 wan hi in huwelijcs minne / eenen sone die Otte hiet
 conceived he in marriage love / a son who Otto was.named
 ‘Hear what happened to this Otto: With his wife, the Lombardin, he conceived in marital love a son named Otto.’

(van Maerlant 1284-89 [MAERLANT])

The author, Jacob van Maerlant, tells the story of Otto I, who carried, among others, the title ‘King of the Lombards’. Onymically, his wife is called *Lumbaerdinne* ‘wife of Lombard’. In any case, Kern (1932: 370) notes, in accordance with this data, that onymic *-inne* was common in Flanders and Brabant in the 13th and 14th centuries, after which it became rare and disappeared by the 17th century.

68 different types are used non-onymically.¹⁰⁴ Much like OE and ME formations in *-en*,

¹⁰⁴Onymic in this paragraph refers to feminised proper names; PNs such as *bakkerin* ‘baker.F’, for instance, can also occur as onymically feminised items, meaning ‘wife/daughter of the baker’. Without proper context information (which was not investigated for each individual token), only feminised proper names are unambiguously onymic in nature.

the pattern *-in* is the pattern for animal feminisation. Together, the Middle Dutch corpora contain 13 types denoting female animals, some of which are still in use (*ezelin* ‘donkey.F, jenny’, *leewin* ‘lioness’, *wolvin* ‘wolf.F’), but others are unusual in Modern Dutch (*apin* ‘ape.F’, *berin* ‘bear.F’, *buffelin* ‘buffalo.F’, *hertin* ‘deer.F’, *hondin* ‘dog.F, bitch’, *luipaardin* ‘leopard.F’, *muilin* ‘mule.F’, *pauwin* ‘peacock.F’, *vossin* ‘fox.F’, *welpin* ‘cub.F’). In Modern Dutch, the default feminising suffix to form animal names is still *-in*; the other feminising suffixes are limited to denoting [+human] referents. von Lindheim (1958: 481) discusses the same areas of use for OE *-en*. Animal names such as *wylfen* ‘wolf.F’, *byren* ‘bear.F’, and *fyxen* ‘fox.F’ (predecessor of the lexicalised pejorative *vixen*) are represented in OE, too. It is thus likely that these Middle Dutch animal names can be traced back to Germanic.¹⁰⁵

From the dataset of PNs feminised by *-in*, it is clear that the use of the suffix covers a wider domain in MD than it does in Modern Dutch, where its productivity has become text-genre dependent. In MD, it takes over the function that later would come in the hands of *-es*: *priorin* ‘prioress’, *meesterin* ‘mistress’, *zondarin* ‘sinner.F’, *zwagerin* ‘sister-in-law’, *voogdin* ‘guardian.F’, *martelarin* ‘martyr.F’, *molenarin* ‘miller.F’, *moorderin* ‘murderer.F’ are all nouns which are now commonly feminised by *-es*, which is non-native and entered Dutch in the 13th century. Moreover, *-in* takes over the function of forming inhabitant and ethnic origin names, some of which remain in MoD: *Russin* ‘Russian woman’, *heidin* ‘heathen, pagan.F’, *morin* ‘Moor.F’, *jodin* ‘jewish woman’, and *Zeelanderin* ‘woman from Zeeland’. Some of these have been replaced by nouns formed through the very productive pattern *-se*, e.g., *heidin* → *heiden-se* and *Zeelanderin* → *Zeeland-se* or *Zeeuw-se*. Lastly, the productivity of *-ster* was restricted in MD. As stated above, this could have been linked with agentive semantics, but also with competition from *-in*, which apparently could still occur in agentive contexts, in which *-ster* took over later on: *gebiederin* ‘commander.F’, *troosterin* ‘consoler.F’, *naaierin* ‘seamstress’, *poorterin* ‘(presumably) wife/daughter of the gatekeeper’, *potterin* ‘potter.F’, *schepperin* ‘creator.F’, *verraderin* ‘traitor.F’, and occurrences

¹⁰⁵Note that feminisation of animal names is common in many languages so long as the animal in question is of some importance to or lives closely together with humans. The more relevance an animal has in a culture, the more likely it will be either feminised through derivation, or there will even be separate lexical forms.

of the stacked suffix *-ster-in* in *leidsterin* ‘guide.F’, *behoedsterin* ‘guardian, preserver.F’. Note that the formal properties of the suffixes become evident in these examples: *-in* does not substitute the masculine suffix *-er*, because it can only attach to a masculine nominal base, whereas *-ster* replaces *-er*.

In Middle Dutch, *koningin* ‘queen’, *gravin* ‘countess’, *keizerin* ‘empress’, and *vriendin* ‘friend.F’ were the most frequent forms ending in *-in*. They have remained highly frequent in Modern Dutch. Token and type counts of *-in* in Modern Dutch corpora are listed in Table 5.15:

<i>-in</i>	NEWSPAPERS		TWEETS	CHATS	SUM
	BE	NL	NL	BE	
f_{TOKEN}	18.783	9.553	3.328	2.991	43.655
PMT	123,3	160,9	143,5	251,9	176,9
f_{TYPE}	50	40	29	40	64
PMT	0,3	0,7	1,3	3,4	0,3

Table 5.15: *-in*: token and type frequencies in Modern Dutch.

The number of types suffixed in *-in* does not surmount that of *-es*. The ten most frequent types ending in *-in* are the following:

	TYPE	f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>vriendin</i> ‘(girl)friend.F’	20.466
2.	<i>koningin</i> ‘queen’	8.484
3.	<i>boerin</i> ‘farmer, peasant.F.F’	819
4.	<i>heldin</i> ‘heroine’	672
5.	<i>kattin</i> ‘cat.F’	580
6.	<i>godin</i> ‘goddess’	570
7.	<i>bazin</i> ‘boss.F’	569
8.	<i>vorstin</i> ‘queen, ruler.F’	370
9.	<i>Russin</i> ‘Russian woman’	301
10.	<i>gravin</i> ‘countess’	256
	SUM	33.087

Table 5.16: Token frequencies of types in *-in* in Modern Dutch texts

Of a total of 34.655 tokens ending in the feminising suffix *-in*, 33.087 are in the top ten as listed above. Thus, 95.5% of all tokens in *-in* correspond to one of these ten different types. In fact, 60% (20.466) of all tokens account for one type only: *vriendin* ‘friend.F, girlfriend’, a highly frequent noun in Dutch. Another 25.5% (8.484) of tokens correspond to the type *koningin* ‘queen’, and, as the list above shows, the other eight most frequent types have an astoundingly low token frequency compared to those two most frequent types. The token frequency of the two types *vriendin* ‘friend.F, girlfriend’ and *koningin* ‘queen’ determines the overall dominance of the suffix *-in* over other feminising suffixes on the token-frequency level in Dutch. This, together with a rather low type frequency, points to a low productivity degree and therefore an advanced level of lexicalisation. Lexicalisation of these units implies a semantic specialisation as well: gender is an intrinsic part of both the masculine base and the feminine derivatives. They behave much like the forms *moeder* ‘mother’ and *father* ‘vader’, whose semantics are gender-specific. Hence, both *-es* and *-in* are patterns which occur in PNs that constitute pairs with their non-feminised counterparts in which there is no clear semantic marked form, as members of each pair display an equipollent relation.

The Tweets corpus, and especially the Chats corpus, have a relatively high number of types. Both display an interestingly creative use of *-in*, with forms that can only be categorised as occasionalisms. Using terminology from Bauer (2001), many *in*-formations are nonce words: “a nonce word fails to become part of the norm [of the speech community]” (Bauer 2001: 38). It differs from new words, i.e., neologisms, in that the latter do become established in the speech community and taken up in reference works such as dictionaries (Bauer 2001: 36, 39). The suffix is used to form feminines from bases that denote derogatory names, usually only in reference to men, e.g. *vrijgezellin* ‘bachelor.F’, *vetzakkin* ‘fat person.F’, *sukkelin* ‘loser, dummy.F’, *dwaazin* ‘dummy, idiot.F’, *nerdin* ‘nerd.F’. They seem to be suffixed in *-in* when this meaning needs to be transferred onto a female referent and female sex needs to be made explicit. Usually, such feminised PNs appear in ironic contexts (46), at times they are meant as a joke (47), and they are sometimes metalinguistically discussed (47) and/or considered against other options (48):

- (46) bakkes dicht dan moete ze ook ma respect voor mij hebbe en moei u
 mouth shut then have.to they also MOD respect for me have and interfere REF
 ni sukkel / **sukkelin** :D
 not idiot.MASC / idiot.FEM SYM

‘Shut your mouth, they’ll have to respect me too, and don’t interfere, you idiot.’

(SoNaR, Chats [WR-U-E-A-0000104034])

- (47) Alhoewel ik dat iedereen diep in zich vanbinnen wel ergens een nerd
 though I that everyone deep in REF inside MOD somewhere a nerd.MASC
 heeft zitten lol, bij vrouwen is dat dan **nerdin** zeker, lol
 has sit INTJ at women is that then nerd.FEM probably INTJ

‘Though I [think] that deep down there is a nerd.M in everyone of us, for women that’s probably a nerd.F.’

(SoNaR, Chats [WR-P-E-A-0000098794])

- (48) Ghehehe, gaan we de **nerdette**/ **nerdin** uithangen?
 INTJ go we the nerd.F/ nerd.F play

‘Are we going to play the nerd?’

(SoNaR, Tweets [WR-P-E-A-0000000255])

In general, speakers appear to be conscious of the fact that they are coining unusual words, and they immediately reflect this behaviour in their discourse, as the above examples show. This use of *-in* is found in MD as well: *gezellin* ‘companion.F’, *gekkin* ‘crazy woman’, *duivelin* ‘devil.F’, *zottin* ‘crazy woman’, *gigantin* ‘giant.F’, *bastardin* ‘bastard.F’, *riesin* ‘crazy woman’. They share that most of them are negatively connoted, and their non-feminised counterparts do not have a clear masculine base (as do forms in *-er*, for example). The pattern *-in* has remained stable in the context of royal titles, animal names, and derogatory names, as well as highly frequent forms which were already in use in MD (*vriendin*, *heldin*, *boerin*, for instance). In agentive contexts, *-ster* has taken over the function of *-in*. It does not exceed these contexts in Modern Dutch, and most formations in *-in* have travelled a long way along the lexicalisation path. Unlike formations in *-ster*, *-e*, and *-es*, *-in* apparently does not need any formal prerequisites from its base, except that it has to be a non-feminised

PN, nor can it be used to derive feminised PNs directly from a non-nominal stem (as is the case for *-ster*). Moreover, unlike other feminised items, due to their onymic etymologies *in*-formations often come in pairs with their bases. They hereby refer to human man-woman pairs, in which the existence of one implies the existence of the other. *Koningin* ‘queen’, for example, is derived from and exists next to *koning* ‘king’, and *vriendin* ‘friend.F, girlfriend’ exists next to *vriend* ‘friend.¬F, boyfriend’. By comparison, *schrijfster* ‘writer.F’ does not imply the existence of a *schrijver* ‘writer.¬F’. The bases from which *in*-forms are derived are thus much less gender-neutral, which also explains the high token frequencies of *in*-derivates.

5.2.1.5 The productivity degrees of *-ster*, *-e*, *-es*, and *-in* compared As opposed to the situation in German (cf. Section 5.3.1), the productivity degrees of Dutch feminisation patterns have been subject to significant diachronic changes. The main change lies in the decreased productivity of *-in*, and the rise of other productive patterns. This can be demonstrated by means of the relative token and type frequencies in the MoD corpus (all four subcorpora combined), compared to the MD corpus.

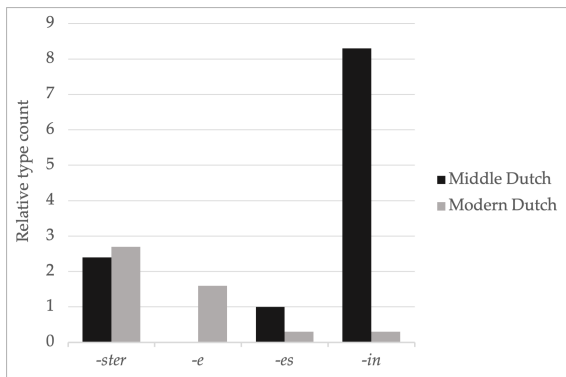


Figure 5.2: Diachronic comparison of relative type frequencies of four feminisation patterns (relative to corpus size, per million corpus tokens).

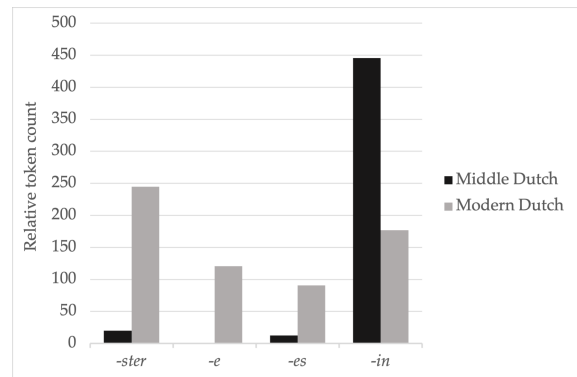


Figure 5.3: Diachronic comparison of relative token frequencies of four feminisation patterns (relative to corpus size, per million corpus tokens).

It is not clear from the relative type count of *-ster*, as displayed in the graph in Fig. 5.3, that it has gained ground in the past centuries. In the above data, corpus size has to be considered, as well as the fact that the MD and MoD corpora contain different text types. Regardless,

it still becomes evident that *-in* has lost much of its productivity over the centuries, as well as *-es*. The relatively high token frequency of *-in* – it has the second-highest relative token frequency after *-ster* – can be explained by the occurrence of two highly frequent PNs, namely *vriendin* and *koningin*. Moreover, in a large MoD corpus of nearly 247 million tokens (compared to ca. 12 million tokens in the MD corpus), *-in* only occurs in 64 different types, compared to 100 types in MD. Hence, the productivity of the pattern has clearly stagnated. It is evident from the data displayed in the graph above that token comparing frequencies cannot make any statements about the productivity of a pattern, as a productive pattern is a “category with growing membership” (Baayen 2009: 900), i.e., productive is a pattern which attracts new types.

Synchronically, varying productivity degrees of allomorphs can be assessed by simply comparing type counts of each pattern. Fig. 5.4 shows the distribution of different patterns per corpus.

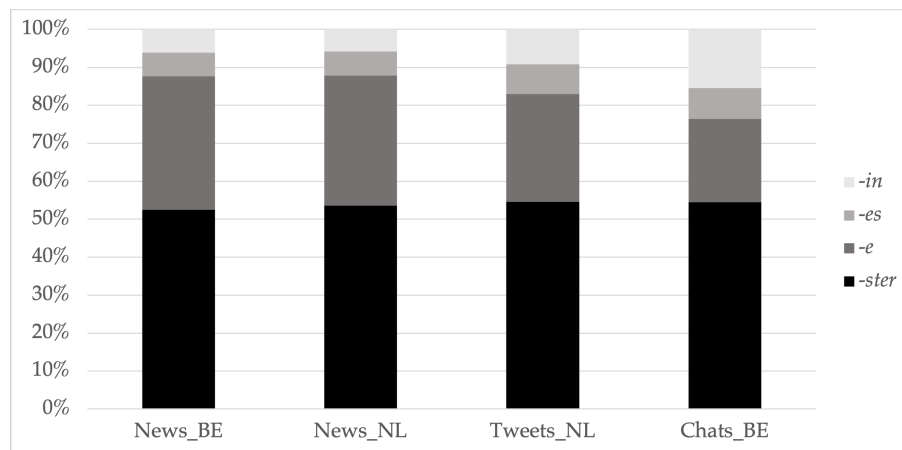


Figure 5.4: Proportion of types following the patterns *-ster*, *-e*, *-es*, and *-in* to the total number of feminised types within a subcorpus.

The reason that *-in* is so strongly overrepresented compared to the expected values in the Chats corpus, and to a lesser extent in the Tweets corpus, was outlined in the previous sections: the pattern is productive in informal language, where it occurs in occasionalisms. The pattern *-e*, on the other hand, might be somewhat less productive in these corpora, because it is productive in loan words which are much less a part of informal language.

Many of these denote nouns in the domains of the arts, science, and philosophy (e.g., *theologe* ‘theologist.F’, *linguïste* ‘linguist.F’, *existentialiste* ‘existentialist.F’), which may not occur in chat language as much as in newspapers. Based on the total type counts in the MoD corpus, a chi square test revealed an overall significant association between morphological pattern and register/corpus ($\chi^2 = 42.174$, $df = 9$, $p < .001^{***}$), although this association is quite weak in general (Cramér’s $V = 0.0821$).¹⁰⁶ The strongest correlations (revealed by Pearson’s residuals) are between the suffix *-e* and the Chats corpus, with a negative correlation of -2.89 indicating a lower frequency of *-e* than expected, and especially the suffix *-in* and the Chats corpus, with a positive correlation of 4.55 indicating a higher frequency of *-in* than expected. Overall, thus, the most informal corpus, the Chats corpus, displays the most deviant uses of patterns, demonstrating that register influences the productivity degree of a pattern. Residuals are displayed in Table 5.17, the outlier threshold being 2. Although only the above-named patterns are outliers, register does set a certain expectancy for each pattern: if a pattern is expected in a formal register, then it is less expected in an informal register (*-e*), and vice versa (*-es* and *-in*). The pattern *-ster* is the most balanced.

PATTERN	NEWS BE	NEWS NL	TWEETS	CHATS
<i>-ster</i>	-0.37	0.07	0.28	0.22
<i>-e</i>	1.49	0.95	-1.19	-2.89
<i>-es</i>	-0.56	-0.41	0.76	0.83
<i>-in</i>	-1.55	-1.76	0.97	4.55

Table 5.17: Correlations of morphological patterns with registers.

In sum, the productivity degrees of the patterns *-in* and *-es* have diachronically stagnated, while *-e* and *-ster* have become productive patterns. Only *-e* is significantly less productive in informal language use in the Chats corpus, while *-in* is significantly more productive (and productive altogether) only in this text type. The two productive patterns in newspapers, and therefore expected to be found in the case study in Chapter 6 as well, are *-ster* and *-e*.

¹⁰⁶All calculations were made using the R software for statistical analysis (R Core Team, 2023). Asterisks symbolise the significance level in Pearson’s chi-square test: $p < .001^{***}$, $p < .01^{**}$, and $p < .05^*$.

5.2.1.6 Excursus: regionally restricted suffixes

-egge The feminising suffix *-egge* is geographically restricted to Flemish dialects and has made it into Standard Dutch in one lexeme, namely *dievegge* ‘thief.F’. The suffix is stressed: *dievegge* [diˈvɛɣə]. Unsurprisingly, this is the only type represented in all OpenSoNaR subsections. However, in the MD corpora, 21 different types (1.7 PMT) ending in *-egge* are documented,¹⁰⁷ equaling 205 tokens (17.0 PMT). In accordance with the geographical distribution of *-egge*, nearly all tokens are found in documents in West-Flanders (mainly Bruges), East-Flanders (mainly Ghent), Zealand, and four instances in Antwerp. Types that occur more than once in the corpus are the following:

	TYPE		f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>meesteregge</i>	‘mistress’	92
2.	<i>poort(er)egge</i>	‘porter.F’	77
3.	<i>kelwaard(er)egge</i>	‘cellarer.F’	10
4.	<i>moord(er)egge</i>	‘murderer.F’	3
5.	<i>procureregge</i>	‘governor.F of a religious institute’	2
6.	<i>spinnegge</i>	‘spinster’	2
7.	<i>viskogegge</i>	‘fishmonger.F’	2
8.	<i>advocategge</i>	‘spokeswoman’	2
9.	<i>dwaasegge</i>	‘fool.F’	2
10.	<i>troost(er)egge</i>	‘consoler.F’	2
	SUM		194

Table 5.18: Token frequencies of types in *-egge* in Middle Dutch.

It should be first noted that the masculine suffix *-er* can either occur as well, or it can be substituted by *-egge*. Formally, it operates where *-ster* could operate, namely where the masculine suffix *-er* occurs, but it only competes with *-ster* in some of these instances. In Standard Dutch, *poort(er)egge* is known as *portierster*, and *spinnegge* as *spinster*. The masculine counterpart *viskoog* to *viskogegge* does not occur in Standard Dutch in that way; where Flemish *koog* stems from the preterit form *kocht* ‘bought’ (from *kopen* ‘to buy’), other

¹⁰⁷Combinations of *-ster* and *-egge* as stacked suffixes are not considered here.

varieties know the form *koper* ‘buyer.–F’, derived from the verbal stem, with a feminine counterpart *koopster*.

Secondly, *-ster* was MD Flemish, too. A contraction of *-ster* and *-igge* into *-strigge* was not a rarity in the region (Koelmans 1978: 70). In the CG, the form *marssteregge* contains such a double feminising suffix *-strigge*. Contraction of *-igge* [-*egge*] with other feminising suffixes is common: it merges with *-nede* into *-nege*, which is used onymically in West Flemish at least until the 20th century (Kern 1932: 370). The suffix was also known in Old English in this *i*-form, specifically in the Anglian area (von Lindheim 1958: 484), *-igge* being an Ingvaenic suffix. As von Lindheim (1958: *ibid.*) states, “die Besonderheit dieses Suffixes [liegt] in seiner dialektischen Begrenzung.”¹⁰⁸ OE *-icge* is semantically restricted to pagan vocabulary, further contributing to its limited use (von Lindheim 1958: 485f.). In Dutch, *-egge* remains a regional suffix which receives non-regional competition from *-ster*, the most productive of the Dutch feminising suffixes.

-er(s)se *-ersse* is mainly Brabantic, although there are instances in the CG from Limburg and even East-Flanders. It is likely a contraction of the masculine ending *-er* with the Germanic suffix **-issjōn*, known in Old High German as *-issa*, too (de Vaan 2017).¹⁰⁹ Northeastern Dutch has the ending *-se*, which can be added to masculines ending in *-er*, thereby causing two homophonous feminising endings *-erse*. It is not stressed, e.g., *bakkerse* [baˈkɛrsə]. With no instances in the SoNaR corpus, there are 443 tokens (36.7 PMT) and 46 types (3.8 PMT) in the Middle Dutch corpus. The following occur more than once:

¹⁰⁸“The peculiarity of the suffix lies in its dialectal limitations.” [N.V.]

¹⁰⁹Accessible online via: <https://neerlandistiek.nl/2017/11/middelnederlands-erse/> [Accessed 01-12-2022].

	TYPE		f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>meestersse</i>	‘mistress, master.F’	82
2.	<i>zangersse</i>	‘singer.F’	79
3.	<i>princersse</i>	‘princess’	54
4.	<i>troostersse</i>	‘consoler.F’	29
5.	<i>toverersse</i>	‘magician.F’	22
6.	<i>middelersse</i>	‘mediator.F’	16
7.	<i>materlaarsse</i>	‘martyr.F’	15
8.	<i>poortersse</i>	‘gatekeeper.F’	15
9.	<i>verwekkersse</i>	‘progenitor.F’	14
10.	<i>kluzenaarsse</i>	‘hermit.F, recluse.F’	12
	SUM		338

Table 5.19: Token frequencies of types in *-ersse* in Middle Dutch.

Many of these *erse*-derivates are likely onymics, especially when referring to an occupation rather than a state, e.g., *kramersse* is the wife of a merchant, whereas *zondersse* ‘sinner.F’ is non-onymic. This is also true of the Low German area, where it is found at the Lower Rhine.

-nede *-nede* is also regionally restricted to Flemish and Zealandic. Mooijaart (1991: 202) analyses *-nede* as the Flemish equivalent to the Pan-Germanic *-in*, which, however, did successfully replace *-nede*. Its origins remain unclear. Like most suffixes, *-nede* is stressed, e.g., *graafnede* [ˌɣraːfˈneːdə]. It regularly occurs in combination with another suffix, for example in the CMN as *graaf-ned-inne* ‘countess’. The CG documents three types (1, 3, 4), to which two (2, 5) can be added from the CMN:

TYPE			f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>graafnede</i>	‘countess’	9
2.	<i>gezelnede</i>	‘companion.F’	5
3.	<i>vriendnede</i>	‘friend.F’	2
4.	<i>zwazenede</i>	‘sister-in-law’	2
5.	<i>geburnede</i>	‘neighbour.F’	2
SUM			20

Table 5.20: Token frequencies of types in *-nede* in Middle Dutch.

All instances are found in Flanders.

5.2.1.7 Inhabitant nouns: an ambiguous pattern One category of adjective-like formations deserves special attention. This category concerns the formation of female PNs through what historically seems to have been syntactic conversion (A → N) but synchronically takes the shape of a suffix. The pattern is restricted to forming female inhabitant names from city and country names. Formations such as *Amerikaanse* ‘American woman’, *Brusselse* ‘woman from Brussels’, *Canadese* ‘Canadian woman’ are frequent examples. As feminine inhabitant nouns, they are homonymous with adjectives formed from geographical nouns (e.g., *Canadese* meaning ‘Canadian woman’ as a noun and ‘Canadian, from Canada’ as an adjective). The pattern is in principle unrestrictedly productive, as it can be applied to nearly any city or country name, but it has been subject to discussion concerning its morphological status. Broadly speaking, two diverging views exist on the formation of these feminines which at least formally look like nominalised adjectives. On the one hand, Schultink (1962), Sassen (1979), and Zonneveld (1986) argue in favour of the adjective analysis. Only to Sassen have these been nominalised, to Schultink and Zonneveld they remain adjectives. Based on invented formations such as *Maarwoldse* ‘woman from [the non-existing town] Maarwold’, Sassen (1979: 31) demonstrates that these formations should be analysed as nouns, because, as opposed to adjectives, they can unproblematically be interpreted without relying on any antecedent or context. As adjectives they would obligatorily need a context:

- (49) a. Dit is een **Rotterdamse** tram en dat is een **Amsterdamse**.
 This is a Rotterdam.ADJ tram and that is a Amsterdam.ADJ
 ‘This is a tram from Rotterdam and that one is from Amsterdam.’
- b. Dit is een **Amsterdamse**.
 This is an Amsterdam.N.F
 ‘This is a woman from Amsterdam.’

(Examples from Fast & van Marle 1988: 423)

As (nominalised) adjectives these geographical names are not specifically feminine, since there is no morphological distinction between masculine and feminine inflection in Dutch. Thus, Schultink and Zonneveld argue that the existence of masculine geographical nouns, e.g. *Amerikaan*, *Brusselaar*, *Canadees*, is what renders these feminine adjectives female (synchronically).

On the other hand, Fast & van Marle (1988) and Fast (1989) treat these formations as nouns, but only as nouns which have come about through derivation in *-se*, not conversion. Their main argument depends on the paradigmatic dimension of *se*-formations. Fast (1989) concludes that the formation of *se*-derivatives highly depends on formation rules of masculine PNs in ending *-er*: whenever a formation in *-er* is difficult, the formation of a feminine counterpart in *-se* will likely be difficult as well. This blocking is observed when speakers are presented with non-existent mono- or disyllabic geographical names, e.g. *Stiel*, *Dreek*, *Grunnik*, *Gradem*, from which they should then form a masculine and a feminine inhabitant name. It is then notable that disyllabic geographical names are more likely to take *-er* and *-se*, respectively (*Grunniker* – *Grunnikse*, *Grademmer* – *Grademse*), when they serve as the base of inhabitant-name formations. Monosyllabic names will more likely take *-enaar* for the masculine inhabitant formation (*Stielenaar*, *Drekenaar*), and the feminine inhabitant formation, i.e., the formation of a feminine noun in *-se* (*Stielse*, *Dreekse*) will be somewhat less likely formed (Fast 1989: 153), though *-se* remains the default option for the formation of female inhabitant names. In the case of monosyllabic *Stiel* and *Dreek*, the derived masculine form in *-enaar* will often be extended by *-se*, forming *Stielenaarse*, *Drekenaarse*. Here formations in *-se* can no longer be interpreted as converts but are to

be analysed as derivatives and *-se* itself as a derivational suffix, reanalysed from a formerly adjectival inflectional element (Fast 1989: 157). New formations are to be understood on the paradigmatic level and are thus the result of analogical coining. Apart from such made-up formations in the above-named studies, there are real occurrences of an unambiguously reanalysed suffix *-se* after the masculine suffix *-enaar* in, e.g., *Oostendenaarse* ‘woman from Ostend’. Such an example can be found in SoNaR (Subtitles subcorpus, i.e., subtitled spoken language). The same sentence contains the adjective *Leuvense* ‘from Leuven’, and the speaker’s mention of the noun *Oostendenaarse* is followed by metalinguistic reconsideration:

- (50) Je woont in Leuven. Heb je de Leuvense tongval overgenomen als
 You live in Leuven have you the Leuven.A tongue taken.over as
Oostendenaarse? Nee. Hoe moet je dat zeggen? *Oostendse*.
 woman.from.Ostend.N.F no how must you that say woman.from.Ostend.N.F
 ‘You live in Leuven. Have you adapted to the Leuven tongue as a woman from
 Ostend [Oostendenaarse]? No. How do you say that? Oostendse.’

(SoNaR, Subtitles for *Blokken*, a Flemish game show [WR-P-E-G-0000006440])

Such reconsideration of the use of *-se* reflects its ambiguous status as either a suffix, appearing as a reanalysed adjectival suffix *-s* in combination with the inflectional ending *-e*, or as two separate elements *-s-e*. In the *ANS*¹¹⁰, inhabitant names are treated as the result of derivation in *-e* from a geographical adjective (Booij 2022a). In light of the above considerations and studies, this analysis seems rather unlikely. From a contrastive perspective, observations from Swedish deliver more evidence for an inflectional ending *-e* that attaches to an adjectival stem (ending in *-s*). Here, as well, the ending *-a* is a feminine suffix in adjectival inflection, e.g., *tysk* ‘German man’ vs. *tyska* ‘German woman’ (Nübling 2000: 217). In Swedish, too, nationality and inhabitant names are prominent examples of still-intact and in-use feminising morphology.

In sum, the morphological status of geographical names in *-se* remains somewhat blurry. From the findings of Fast (1989) and Fast & van Marle (1988) it seems an attractive assumption that the adjectival ending *-se* has become reanalysed over time as a feminine suffix

¹¹⁰*Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst.*

marking inhabitant names. This would explain their formal properties and the fact that in their own semantic context, they underlie no restrictions. It also explains their occurrence as suffixes in made-up forms. In the remainder of this work, inhabitant names will be considered suffixed in *-se* through derivation, with *-se* itself a reanalysed unit consisting of two former suffixes: a suffix *-s* that forms adjectives from geographical nouns, and an inflectional element *-e*.

5.2.1.8 Diminution as feminisation A special case of feminisation happens through diminution, and it has no specific dedicated feminising morphology. Jurafsky (1993, 1996) sees feminisation as one of the most common features of diminutive affixes on a macro-typological level. The origins of diminution as feminisation can be traced back to metaphorical processes:

As highly salient natural classes, sex and gender occur throughout the category system of natural languages. Thus metaphors whose source or target are gender or sex are extremely common crosslinguistically. One resulting paradox is the dual linking of female gender with both the diminutive and the augmentative crosslinguistically [...].

(Jurafsky 1996: 544)

Ample evidence for the link between augmentation and the feminine gender is found in Romance.¹¹¹ Feminine augmentatives are the result of a metaphor linking origins and sources to the concept ‘mother’ (cf. Matisoff 1991; Jurafsky 1996: 546). Augmentatives using the noun *mother* are even quite common crosslinguistically. English examples are given by Matisoff (1991: 294): *the mother of all journalistic changes, the mother of all trips*. Thus, with the concept of ‘mother’ as a metaphorical source, and the concept of ‘source’ being

¹¹¹Kahane & Kahane (1948) document a long series of Romance feminine nouns and their masculine counterparts, whereby the feminine version serves an augmentative function. For example, Spanish *cuchilla* ‘large knife (FEM, AUG)’ stands in opposition with *cuchillo* ‘knife (MASC)’ (Kahane & Kahane 1948: 152), as does Italian *tavola* ‘table (FEM, AUG)’ versus its *tavolo* ‘small table (MASC)’ (ibid.: 141).

linked to importance, Jurafsky (1996: 546) proposes two metaphors, namely ORIGINS ARE MOTHERS and IMPORTANT THINGS ARE MOTHERS.

On the other hand, however, feminisation and diminution are based on the WOMEN ARE CHILDREN/SMALL THINGS metaphor (Jurafsky 1996: *ibid.*). Kornexl (2008) analyses, for example, the English suffix *-ette*, a loan diminutive from French regularly used to form feminised PNs (e.g., *suffragette*, *majorette* etc.). She argues that this use of diminutives is not only a kind of feminisation but also pertains to the domain of evaluative morphology, because connotations adhering to the *ette*-nouns stem from a male, chauvinistic perception of women (Kornexl 2008: 254). Jurafsky (1996: 546), again, notes in this regard that “[w]omen are physically smaller and less powerful than men, [...] these characteristics link them with children in quite different way than as mothers.”

Diminution in Dutch does not happen very often, but it does occur. An in-depth analysis of diminution as a feminisation process is still outstanding. However, in gathering data for the corpus study in Chapter 6, in search of PNs with female referents, the data occasionally contained a diminuted form. These were left out of the data analysis, but (without being able to make any steadfast quantitative statements) there appeared to have been a decreasing tendency of using diminutive morphology in reference to women. Due to its evaluative and often negatively perceived function, feminism could have had an impact on the decrease of diminution in contexts with female referents. Diminutives as feminising morphology seem to occur more often in older publications, especially in the first half of the 20th century. There are two different ways in which feminisation in Dutch is linked with diminution: first, an already feminised PN can be additionally diminuted, and in this case it has a clear diminutive and evaluative reading. Thus, one would encounter nouns such as *prinsesje* ‘little princess’, *schrijfstertje* ‘writer.F.DIM’, and *speelstertje* ‘player.F.DIM’; the diminutive adds a certain demeaning tone to the noun. *Prinsesje* ‘princess.F.DIM’, for example, is more or less lexicalised into a unit denoting an uptight woman or girl; the diminutives in *schrijfstertje* and *speelstertje* add a clearly degrading value to these nouns.

- (51) Tenslotte komt er nog een ingetogen **schrijfstertje** in het huis wonen, dat
finally comes there also a modest writer.F.DIM in the house live who

zich bezighoudt met onderzoeken aangaande een Romeins schandaaltje in
herself occupies with investigations concerning a Roman scandal.DIM in
de tijden voor Christus.
the times before Christ

‘Finally, a modest writer moves into the house, who keeps herself occupied with
investigations concerning a small Roman scandal in the times BCE.’

(*Trouw*, 20 November, 1971)

It becomes clear from the above example that the diminuted noun *schrijfsterje* appears in a rather condescending context, in which her research is also emphasised as irrelevant by another diminutive in *schandaaltje* ‘small, irrelevant scandal’.

Second, some masculine PNs, but also nouns denoting inanimate entities can receive a diminutive suffix with the primary function of feminising the noun, but with a nearly inevitable secondary evaluative reading. Some of these are only [+human] nouns because of the diminutive. Examples are *killertje* ‘killer.DIM’, *vechttertje* ‘fighter.DIM’, *vechtersbaasje* ‘fighter.DIM’, *schatje* ‘cutie.DIM’, *dommerdje* ‘dumb person.DIM’, *persoontje* ‘person.DIM’, *zwervertje* ‘tramp, vagabond.DIM’, *juweeltje* ‘juwel.DIM’, etc. Some of these (*vechttertje*, *vechtersbaasje*, *zwervertje*) can also be used with male referents but in this case the diminutive only fulfills its default function of diminution. The referent of *vechttertje*, for example, would be a boy, not an adult man.

- (52) Ik wil Beatrix vooral lief laten overkomen, want dat is ze ook. Ze is
I want Beatrix especially nice let come.across because that is she too she is
niet autoritair [...] ze is een **schatje**.
not authoritarian [...] she is a darling.DIM

‘I want to display Beatrix as a nice person, because that is what she is. She is not
authoritarian, she is a darling.’

(*Algemeen Dagblad*, 24 December, 1980)

Nouns such as *schatje* and *persoontje* are lexicalised to denote a female referent. The female referent of, e.g., *zwervertje* can either be a small girl or boy, or an adult woman. In these examples, the WOMEN ARE CHILDREN metaphor clearly takes effect: women, but not men,

pertain to the same class as girls *and* boys. As mentioned before, diminutives are not included in the data in the case study in Chapter 6, because they constitute an ambiguous field, in which the status as a feminising suffix is not transparent.

5.2.2 Compounding

According to de Caluwe & van Santen (2001: 63), formation of PNs through compounding is restricted, notwithstanding the high productivity of compounding as a morphological process in Dutch. Different nouns can be used as a gender marker in compounds, e.g., *vrouw* ‘woman’, *man* ‘man’, *meisje* ‘girl’, *jongen* ‘boy’, *broeder* ‘brother’, *zuster* ‘sister’ etc. (ibid.: 64). The pattern will be exemplified in this section by feminisation through the lexeme *vrouw* ‘woman’, which is the most common in Dutch. Looking at MoD data from the SoNaR corpus, compounding does not look all that rare, though it is often unclear whether the compound with *vrouw* is formed analogically or in opposition to a compound with *man*. As outlined in Chapter 2, compounding is one of the areas in which feminisation within a framework of markedness fails, because compounds with *vrouw* are not marked in comparison to their counterparts with *man*. In all four subcorpora combined, there are 330 types as compounds with *vrouw*. Left out were such types whose meaning is either transparently or ambiguously ‘wife of X’, e.g., *presidentsvrouw* ‘wife of a president’, *doktersvrouw* ‘wife of a doctor’. While forms such as *buurvrouw* ‘neighbour.F’ and *zakenvrouw* ‘business woman’ were doubtlessly coined analogically to their masculine counterparts (*buurman* ‘neighbour.¬F’, *zakenman* ‘business man’), others behave differently. *Vrouw*-compounds do not need to be formed analogically to *man*-compounds. Examples are *moslimvrouw* ‘muslim woman’, formed from *moslim* ‘muslim.¬F’ rather than *moslimman* ‘muslim man’, *burgervrouw* ‘citizen-woman’ formed from *burger* ‘citizen.¬F’ rather than *burgerman* ‘citizen-man’. As such, they are formed next to masculines which in turn have been formed through other morphological patterns, e.g., derivation in *-er*. Other feminisation options may be available: to *moslimvrouw* ‘muslim-woman’ the less pejorative *moslima* ‘muslim.F’ is available, to *burgervrouw* ‘citizen-woman’ the derived feminine *burgeres* ‘citizen.F’ is available.

There are often no masculine counterparts available for other *vrouw*-compounds, because they denote typically female occupations: *vroedvrouw* ‘midwife’, *wasvrouw* ‘laundress’. It is not always clear which of 330 types are unambiguous instances of feminisation through *vrouw*-compounds, because, as opposed to suffixation, compounding is a process which does not require a masculine counterpart. However, when a compound is formed with *man*, it can always be substituted by *vrouw*. Both types are henceforth considered instances of feminisation. Certain types are well established, particularly the ten most frequent types:

	TYPE		f_{TOKEN}
1.	<i>buurvrouw</i>	‘neighbour.F’	2.272
2.	<i>huisvrouw</i>	‘housewife’	1.121
3.	<i>poetsvrouw</i>	‘cleaning lady’	516
4.	<i>sportvrouw</i>	‘sportswoman’	454
5.	<i>gastvrouw</i>	‘hostess’	415
6.	<i>zakenvrouw</i>	‘businesswoman’	373
7.	<i>doelvrouw</i>	‘goalie.F’	301
8.	<i>bewindsvrouw</i>	‘minister.F’	282
9.	<i>vroedvrouw</i>	‘midwife’	264
10.	<i>raadsvrouw</i>	‘lawyer.F’	136
	SUM		6.134

Table 5.21: Token frequencies of *vrouw*-compounds with in Modern Dutch.

The total token frequency of compounds with *vrouw* is 8.149, hence these 10 most frequent types comprise 75.3% of all tokens. Two of these, *huisvrouw* ‘housewife’ and *vroedvrouw* ‘midwife’ occur in Middle Dutch texts as well. Here, there are 1.175 tokens and 23 different compounds with *vrouw* and its MD cognate *wijf*:

TYPE			f _{TOKEN}
1.	<i>jonkvrouw/-wif</i>	‘noblewoman’	996
2.	<i>huisvrouw/-wif</i>	‘housewife’	61
3.	<i>vroedvrouw/-wif</i>	‘midwife’	38
4.	<i>volkvrouw/-wif</i>	(proper name)	20
5.	<i>gemeenwif</i>	‘ordinary woman’	9
6.	<i>dienstwif</i>	‘service woman’	7
7.	<i>speelwif</i>	‘actress’	5
8.	<i>landsvrouw</i>	‘vassal.F’	5
9.	<i>bijwif</i>	‘spouse.F’	4
10.	<i>kamerwif</i>	‘chambermaid’	4
SUM			1.149

Table 5.22: Token frequencies of *vrouw*-compounds in Middle Dutch.

Both in Middle and Modern Dutch, any compound pattern occurs: A+N, N+N, V+N, Adv+N. However, while the parts of speech as first members of compounds in MD was apparently more balanced,¹¹² N+N compounds outweigh any other pattern in Modern Dutch (Fig. 5.5).

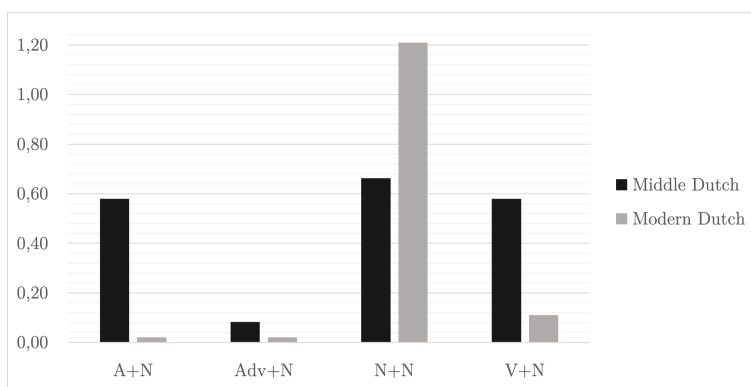


Figure 5.5: Compounding patterns of compounds in *vrouw* in Middle Dutch and Modern Dutch, type counts relative to corpus size.

A+N and V+N compounds with *vrouw/wif* are rather transparent in their meanings: the adjective characterises the compositional head (‘a woman who is X’), while the verb expresses

¹¹²Only 23 compound types with *vrouw* were found in MD corpora, which may influence the proportions.

an action carried out by the referent of the compositional head ('a woman who does X'). The semantic relation between the nominal head and the left-hand noun in N+N compounds is more idiosyncratic (a well-known property of N+N compounds), which allows entire sequences of compounds to be formed, perhaps as a form of economy and semantic compression. For instance, the Modern Dutch corpus contains forms such as *moerasvrouw* 'swamp lady' (53), *vuurvrouw* 'fire woman' (54), *ideeënvrouw* 'woman of ideas' (55), *drakenvrouw* 'dragon woman' (56), the semantics of which have to be derived from the context.

- (53) ...ik vertolk als acteur voor de poppenkast de rol van **moerasvrouw**,
 ...I interpret as actor for the puppet.theatre the role of swamp.woman
 uiteraard in een kleurrijke vermomming.
 of.course in a colourful disguise
 'I interpret the role of a swamp woman as an actor in the puppet theatre, of course
 in a colourful disguise.'

(SoNaR, News [WR-P-P-G-0000547072])

- (54) Vooral zorgen dat je veel vuur hebt en dat je kooltjes gaan gloeien.
 Especially take.care that je much fire have and that your coal goes smoulder
 Ik ben hier de **vuurvrouw** ;-)
 I am here the fire.lady SYM
 'Take special care that you have a lot of fire and that your coals smoulder. I am the
 fire lady here!'

(SoNaR, Chats [WR-P-E-L-0000000329])

- (55) ...potentiële makers worden er binnen gehaald op grond van visionaire,
 ...potential makers are there inside carried on grounds of visionary
 surreële plannen. ...Toebosch is zo'n **ideeënvrouw**.
 surreal plans ...Toebosch is such.a woman.of.ideas
 'Potential makers are brought in on the basis of visionary, surreal plans. Toebosch is
 such a woman of ideas.'

(SoNaR, News [WR-P-P-G-0000158352])

- (56) En wat opvalt, is dat we in 2006 nog altijd niet verwachten dat een
 And what stands.out is that we in 2006 still still do.not expect that a
 vrouw onze baas is. . . . Een succesvolle vrouw wordt nog altijd gezien als een
 woman our boss is . . . a successful woman is still still seen as a
drakenvrouw.
 dragon.woman

‘And what still stands out is that we still don’t expect our boss to be a woman, in
 2006. A successful woman is still seen as a dragon woman.’

(Sonar, News [WR-P-P-G-0000205535])

The first, *moerasvrouw*, denotes a woman living in a swampy area, which is a major characteristic of that person; *vuurvrouw* is agentive but lacks the proper verb, as it refers to a woman who makes fire or is responsible for it; *ideeënvrouw* is possessive, referring to a woman with lots of inspiration and ideas, and, lastly, *drakenvrouw* is – judging from its contextual occurrence – a successful woman who is judged negatively by others because of her success. The noun *draak* ‘dragon’ is used metaphorically and is a clear idiosyncratic feature. The pattern thus allows speakers to form any compound in which the noun complement modifies the nominal head *vrouw* in such a way that the relation between the two can be derived from the context. Almost none of these types that occur in the Modern Dutch corpus are found in dictionaries as lexicalised units and are thus mostly occasionalisms. This is not true for A+N compounds. The only A+N patterns the Modern Dutch corpora contain are also found in Middle Dutch, namely *vroedvrouw* ‘midwife’, *jonkvrouw* ‘noblewoman’, and *edelvrouw* ‘noblewoman’.¹¹³

Lastly, Middle Dutch texts (notably the CG) contain many compounds with proper names, in which *vrouw-* is the first element, often eroded to a prefix-like item.

¹¹³There is one more A+N compound in the Modern Dutch corpus, *heterovrouw* ‘heterosexual woman’, occurring as a hapax.

- (57) dat lant [...] dat pietre blef van der diederika **vernatalien** sone in
 the land [...] that Pieter remained from the Diederik of.lady.Natalie son in
 verstarften van dien vorseide diederika
 heritage of the said Diederik
 ‘The land that was left to Pieter by Diederik, the son of the Lady Natalie, as the
 heritage of said Diederik.’

(CORP. I, 0641: 1085, 8. 2 January, 1286)

Likewise, the form *wijf* can be a compound element in proper names, which are still transparent in Middle Dutch: *Liedwijf* (Liedewij), *Hadewijf* (Hadewijch). These are typical of proper names and are not subject of interest here.

Elements in compounds may also be used in a process of undoing gender, where a compounding element cliticises, drifts away from its nominal or adjectival source, and becomes a suffix-like element. Examples are *-kracht*, *-kundige*, *-figuur*, *-persoon*, *-mensen* (de Caluwe & van Santen 2001: 63). Such formations are discussed in Chapter 2. They are instances of *undoing gender*, as opposed to compounds in which the head is a unit whose denotation is lexically sex-specified.

5.3 Feminisation patterns in German

5.3.1 Derivation

5.3.1.1 -in Wellmann (1975: 109) reports that more than 90% of German feminised nouns are formed by *-in*.¹¹⁴ While Dutch retains various feminisation patterns, the most productive of which derive feminine PNs directly from verbs (suffixation in *-ster*), German has one productive pattern that needs a masculine nominal base to attach to. In MHG, *-in* was the only attested feminisation pattern. In OHG, Germanic declensions were still partly intact, and next to derivation in *-inna* (the OHG cognate to *-in*), *ô*-declensions were used to derive female nouns directly from verbs.¹¹⁵ From MHG onwards, for a lack of any other

¹¹⁴As will be corroborated in Chapter 6, it can be mentioned preemptively that 90% is an understatement – in German newspapers of the last 80 years, about 98% of feminised PNs contain *-in*. All other patterns of feminisation together make up only 2% of feminised forms.

¹¹⁵Compare to Modern German participles such as *Studierender* ‘student.¬F’ and *Studierende* ‘student.F’.

feminisation pattern in the High German area, feminine PNs can only be derived from masculine PNs (Doleschal 1992: 31). German *-in* shares its function with Dutch *-in* and derived not only feminised PNs but also animal names. The pattern has experienced a major context expansion in German, from its occurrence with masculine *er*-derivates in MHG, to weakly inflected masculine [+human] nouns such as *Erbe* ‘heir.¬F’ and *Nachbar* ‘neighbor.¬F’ in NHG¹¹⁶ (Kopf 2023: 200-204). In Dutch, on the other hand, the functions that *-in* fulfills in German are fulfilled by other suffixes, such as *-ster* in the case of (most) *er*-derivates.

In the *Referenzkorpus Mittelhochdeutsch* (REM), many *in*-formations thus overlap with those in the Middle Dutch corpora, namely 31 types. Feminised animal names in MHG are unsurprisingly the same as those found in MD: *Eselin* ‘donkey.F’, *Löwin* ‘lioness’, *Wölfin* ‘wolf.F’, *Äffin* ‘ape.F’. The most frequently occurring *in*-derivates in REM are also the most frequently occurring forms in MD (transcribed into Modern German in Table 5.23 below). MHG texts comprise all genres except for poetry, and all data from the 11th until the 14th century in the REM.

	TYPE	f_{TOKEN}
1.	<i>Königin</i> ‘queen’	424
2.	<i>Wirtin</i> ‘host.F, innkeeper.F’	104
3.	<i>Gräfin</i> ‘sovereign.F’	61
4.	<i>Freundin</i> ‘friend.F’	46
5.	<i>Priorin</i> ‘donkey.F’	41
6.	<i>Äbtissin</i> ‘abbess’	30
7.	<i>Männin</i> ‘woman’	30
8.	<i>Eselin</i> ‘donkey.F’	19
9.	<i>Minner</i> ‘lover.F’	17
10.	<i>Fürstin</i> ‘monarch.F’	16
	SUM	788

Table 5.23: Token frequencies (f) of types in *-inne* in Middle High German.

¹¹⁶Feminisation of weakly inflected masculines occurred mostly through feminine declensions in OHG, and this category of weakly inflected masculine PNs remained largely untouched by *-in* until NHG.

With a total of 1.019 tokens ending in *-in(ne)*, and 90 types, token values of these five types make up 77.3% of tokens in *-inne*. Other types with relatively high token frequencies occur in Middle Dutch data as well, although by Modern Dutch *-es* took over: *Sünderin* vs. *zondares* ‘sinner.F’; *Märtyrerin* vs. *martelares* ‘martyr.F’; *Vogtin* vs. *voogdes* ‘bailiff.F’.

As opposed to Modern Dutch use of *-in*, German *-in* is subject to only a few restrictions. Doleschal (1992: 36f.) lists these restrictions, which are phonologically (I), morphologically (II-IV), or semantically (V-VI) motivated:

- I. Nouns ending in a vowel or *-el* (e.g., *Nazi* ‘nazi’, *Kumpel* ‘mate’)
- II. Nouns with non-masculine grammatical gender (e.g., *Tunte* ‘faggot’)
- III. Nominalised adjectives (e.g., *Reiche* ‘rich person’)
- IV. Derivates in *-ling*, *-erich*, *-ian* (e.g., *Flüchtling* ‘refugee’)
- V. [-human] nouns as metaphors and metonymies (e.g., *Spaßvogel* ‘joker’, *Vorstand* ‘board’)
- VI. Idiosyncratic exceptions (e.g., *Gast* ‘guest’)

These exceptions to feminisation in German are by no means absolute. As Doleschal (1992: 37) notes, *Kumpelin* ‘buddy.F’ may be acceptable to some speakers, and other forms such as *Gästin* ‘guest.F’ are all but rare in earlier stages of German, as well as in recent years. Furthermore, metaphorically used [-human] nouns such as *Vorstand* ‘board member.F’ and *Stadtrat* ‘city council member.F’ are often feminised into *Vorständin* and *Stadträtin* (cf. Chapter 2), presumably under the influence of feminist language reform as well as perhaps their increasing interpretation as [+human] nouns, which over time all join the ranks of feminisability in German.

Onymic feminisation is another property of *-in*, which was productive in German from the 13th until the 18th century (Schmuck 2017: 34). Werth (2022), who investigated occurrences of onymic (patronymic and matrimonial) *-in* in the *Deutsches Textarchiv*, concludes that the greatest changes took place between 1750 and 1775. This downfall of onymic feminisation is multicausal for Werth. First, societal shifts away from feudalism and toward a

centralised mass society in the 18th century carried with it an emphasis on the individual (in the educated middle class). As such, the marking of *-in* as a property marker may have become inappropriate. Second, the juridical necessity of having one official name may have contributed further to a rather quick regression of onymic *-in*. Third and lastly, connected with the loss of onymic *-in* are tendencies in the grammar of proper names. Proper-name inflections have likewise been removed, albeit somewhat later in the course of the 19th century, in order to maintain the *Namenkörper* ‘body of the name’ (Werth 2021, 2022). Much like *-in*, *-sche* is both a functional and an onymic suffix; it is the Low German equivalent of *-in*, though it has been attested in Middle German as well (Frings 1932: 29). However, when the High German written standard was adopted in Low German, High German *-in* advanced in contexts of functional feminisation, whereas *-sche* became more and more linked to onymic feminisation (Werth 2015: 70). Onymic use of feminising suffixes has nevertheless experienced a decline in its entirety and has been replaced by other strategies, in particular definite articles which specialised on female referents, and the rise of the form of address *Frau* (Schmuck 2017: 47-53).

A historical study by Haß-Zumkehr (2003) demonstrated that the semantics of formations in *-in* are subject to diachronic developments. The author’s study is based on the historical IDS corpus (18th century to 1945) and the IDS corpus of contemporary German (1946-2003). Both corpora contain mostly texts from newspapers and other functional text genres. Nouns such as *Tänzerin* ‘dancer.F’, *Malerin* ‘painter.F’, *Dichterin* ‘poet.F’, PNs denoting an artistic occupation, were more common in the historical corpus. After 1945, nouns denoting a political function, sports, image, a characteristic of a person’s appearance, and economic functions become common (Haß-Zumkehr 2003: 175). Reminiscent of Dutch historical data, the most common nouns in *-in* between the 18th century and 1945 are *Königin* ‘queen’, *Gemahlin* ‘wife’, *Freundin* ‘friend.F’, *Fürstin* ‘sovereign.F’, *Gräfin* ‘countess’, and *Prinzessin* ‘princess’ (ibid.).

5.3.1.2 Other suffixes: *-euse*, *-ine*, *-ice*, *-iss*, *-ess* According to Wellmann (1975: 112), *-euse* is “active” in Modern German and competes with *-in* in combination with *-ier* (*Kassiererin*

‘casheer.F’) and *-eur* (*Redakteurin* ‘editor.F’), although these competitors are rare. In the *Kernkorpus* (1900-1999 and 2000-2010), 125 tokens end in *-euse*, and these belong to fifteen different types. Some of those already receive competition by forms in *-in* in the 20th century.

TYPE <i>-euse</i> (X)			f _{TOKEN}	TYPE <i>-in</i> (Y)	f _{TOKEN}	X:Y
1.	<i>Friseuse</i>	‘hairstylist.F’	40	<i>Friseurin</i>	7	6:1
2.	<i>Masseuse</i>	‘massage.F’	22	<i>Masseurin</i>	8	3:1
3.	<i>Souffleuse</i>	‘prompter.F’	19	<i>Souffleurin</i>	0	19:0
3.	<i>Diseuse</i>	‘speaker.F’	11	<i>Diseurin</i>	0	11:0
5.	<i>Chanteuse</i>	‘chansonette’	5	<i>Chanteurin</i>	0	5:0
6.	<i>Charmeuse</i>	‘charmer.F’	5	<i>Charmeurin</i>	0	5:0
7.	<i>Dompteuse</i>	‘animal trainer.F’	5	<i>Dompteurin</i>	0	5:0
8.	<i>Balleteuse</i>	‘ballerina’	3	<i>Balleteurin</i>	0	3:0
9.	<i>Kommandeuse</i>	‘commander.F’	3	<i>Kommandeurin</i>	0	3:0
10.	<i>Jongleuse</i>	‘juggler.F’	2	<i>Jongleurin</i>	1	2:1
11.	<i>Konfektioneuse</i>	‘manufacturer.F’	2	<i>Konfektioneurin</i>	0	2:0
12.	<i>Akquisiteuse</i>	‘canvasser, agent.F’	1	<i>Akquisiteurin</i>	0	1:0
13.	<i>Chauffeuse</i>	‘driver.F’	1	<i>Chauffeurin</i>	1	1:1
14.	<i>Chefeuse</i>	‘chef.F’	1	<i>Chefeurin</i>	0	1:0
15.	<i>Coiffeuse</i>	‘hairstylist.F’	1	<i>Coiffeurin</i>	0	1:0
SUM			123	SUM	17	7:1

Table 5.24: Token frequencies (f) of types in *-euse* and *-eurin* in New High German. The column ‘X:Y’ lists the proportion of forms in *-euse* to forms in *-eurin*.

The *Kernkorpus* only offers a limited insight. Looking at data from recent years (2019-2020) in the DWDS *Webkorpus*, it becomes evident that in some of the above contexts, *-in* is preferred in the meanwhile.

TYPE <i>-euse</i> (X)		f _{TOKEN}	TYPE <i>-in</i> (Y)	f _{TOKEN}	X:Y	
1.	<i>Friseuse</i>	‘hairstylist.F’	1.265	<i>Friseurin</i>	7.498	1:6
2.	<i>Masseuse</i>	‘masseur.F’	457	<i>Masseurin</i>	4.361	1:10
3.	<i>Souffleuse</i>	‘prompter.F’	1.500	<i>Souffleurin</i>	21	71:1
3.	<i>Diseuse</i>	‘speaker.F’	206	<i>Diseurin</i>	1	206:1
5.	<i>Chanteuse</i>	‘chansonette.F’	300	<i>Chanteurin</i>	1	300:1
6.	<i>Charmeuse</i>	‘charmer.F’	193	<i>Charmeurin</i>	22	9:1
7.	<i>Dompteuse</i>	‘animal trainer.F’	124	<i>Dompteurin</i>	128	1:1
8.	<i>Balleteuse</i>	‘ballerina’	48	<i>Balleteurin</i>	0	48:0
9.	<i>Kommandeuse</i>	‘commander.F’	38	<i>Kommandeurin</i>	101	1:3
10.	<i>Jongleuse</i>	‘juggler.F’	13	<i>Jongleurin</i>	109	1:8
11.	<i>Konfektioneuse</i>	‘manufacturer.F’	0	<i>Konfektioneurin</i>	0	0:0
12.	<i>Akquisiteuse</i>	‘canvasser, agent.F’	0	<i>Akquisiteurin</i>	30	0:30
13.	<i>Chauffeuse</i>	‘driver.F’	171	<i>Chauffeurin</i>	244	1:1
14.	<i>Chefeuse</i>	‘chef.F’	1	<i>Chefeurin</i>	0	1:0
15.	<i>Coiffeuse</i>	‘hairstylist.F’	921	<i>Coiffeurin</i>	20	46:1
SUM			5.237	SUM	12.536	1:2

Table 5.25: Token frequencies (f) of types in *-euse* and *-eurin* in New High German. The column ‘X:Y’ lists the proportion of forms in *-euse* to forms in *-eurin*.

Hence, the most frequent forms (*Friseuse/-eurin* and *Masseuse/-eurin*) prefer *-in* over *-euse*, which provides an argument for the fact that the adaptation of loan words to the German system leads to feminisation by *-in*. Other forms in *-euse* can be replaced by other patterns in *-in*. For instance, next to *Danseuse* ‘dancer.F’ goes native *Tänzerin*; to *Kapiteuse* ‘capitan.F’ there is *Kapitänin*; to *Journaleuse* ‘journalist.F’ there is a *Journalistin*.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, *Balleteuse* ‘ballerina’ occurs, which has *Ballerina* by its side, and *Stewardeuse* ‘stewardess’ has *Stewardess*. Competition of *-euse* to *-eurin* may have stylistic reasons. To Doleschal (1992: 28) these formations are of a euphemistic nature, in order to counteract the pejorative subtext of formations in *-euse*.

A number of other suffixes occur in a handful of forms. Firstly, *-ine* sometimes occurs in forms which Doleschal (1992: 36f.) has listed as non-feminisable with *-in* because they end in a vowel. Wellmann (1975: 113) mentions *Nazine* ‘nazi.F’ to *Nazi*, and in recent years

¹¹⁷All named *-euse* forms are real attestations from the *Webkorpus*. In total, there are 309 tokens and 30 types ending in *-euse* in the corpus in the last two years.

the form *Azubine* ‘trainee.F’ to the acronym *Azubi* has gained ground. Statistics from the DWDS corpora show that *Azubine* occurs first in a newspaper in 1997, and it has since become more familiar, with a peak of 43 absolute occurrences in 2018.¹¹⁸

Next, *-ice* occurs in, e.g., *Direktrice* ‘director.F’ (9 occurrences in 2019-2020 in the DWDS Webcorpus). Though Wellmann (1975: 114) names *Inspektrice* ‘inspector.F’ and *Redaktrice* ‘editor.F’, they do not occur in the corpus. Moreover, *Direktrice* is not a parallel form to *director* – much like Dutch *directrice* – because it contains idiosyncratic semantics (Dolleschal 1992: 29). *-ess* and *-iss* are interesting because *-in* complementarily attaches to it in *Prinzessin* ‘princess’ and *Äbtissin* ‘abdess’. The former existed until the 19th century as the French loan word *Prinzeß* (equal to Dutch *prinses*, which retained its original form),¹¹⁹ and the latter already contains *-in* in MHG (cf. Section 5.3.1). In sum, suffixes other than *-in*, and to a significantly smaller extent *-euse*, only occur in certain forms and cannot be analysed as productive suffixes in German. Pressure from *-in* on other suffixes is so strong that it either replaces or complements.

5.3.2 Compounding

Haß-Zumkehr (2003) found nearly 2.500 compounds in the corpora, of which more than 300 have a token frequency of at least eight. The latter are mainly lexicalised items that have been feminised for either of two reasons: they are feminised for legal reasons (since about 1985), or they are lexicalised in an emancipatory-ironic way. The former always precede the latter by about one to three years (Haß-Zumkehr 2003: 169-170). Using a diachronic comparison of compounding with *Frau* with the suffix *-in*, the author concludes that compounding has become productive later than suffixation by *-in*; in the historical corpus she finds 33 forms with *Frau*, compared to 491 in *-in* (Haß-Zumkehr 2003: 173-175). Originally, compounds with *Frau* expressed traditionally female (professional) occupations (*Abwaschfrau* ‘dish woman’, *Kinderfrau* ‘nanny’, *Wartefrau* ‘nanny, caregiver, (toilet) attendant’), social roles or status (*Freifrau* ‘baroness’, *Jungfrau* ‘damsel, virgin’), family roles (*Ehefrau* ‘wife’,

¹¹⁸[https://www.dwds.de/r/plot: DWDS-Zeitungskorpus 1946-2022: ‘Azubine’](https://www.dwds.de/r/plot:DWDS-Zeitungskorpus%201946-2022:%20%27Azubine%27) [Accessed 08-12-2022].

¹¹⁹<https://www.dwds.de/wb/Prinzessin> [Accessed 08-12-2022]

Hausfrau ‘housewife’, *Nebenfrau* ‘concubine’), and onymic use (*Kutschersfrau* ‘the coachman’s wife’, *Offiziersfrau* ‘the officer’s wife’) (Haß-Zumkehr 2003: 173-174). In more recent times, other functions such as political functions (*CDU-Frau* ‘CDU-lady’) or ethnic names (*Zulufrau* ‘zulu woman’) joined the class of *Frau*-compounds (ibid: 172). Compounds with *Frau* were originally not formed as substitutes to those with *Mann*, because they pertained to separate occupational domains. Compounds with *Frau* which substitute *Mann* were only introduced in the mid-20th, albeit controversially (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 131). From a feminist perspective, *in*-derivation (\rightarrow *Männin*) was argued against, because this requires a masculine base first, which to *Frau* does not apply (ibid.: 132).

Concerning the form of such compounds, contemporary German by and large displays the same characteristics as MoD, based on the occurrence of compounds in the 2000-2010 Kernkorpus. 56 different types can be distinguished, onymic use¹²⁰ is not included (cf. Fig. 5.6). There is a clear preference for N+N compounding.

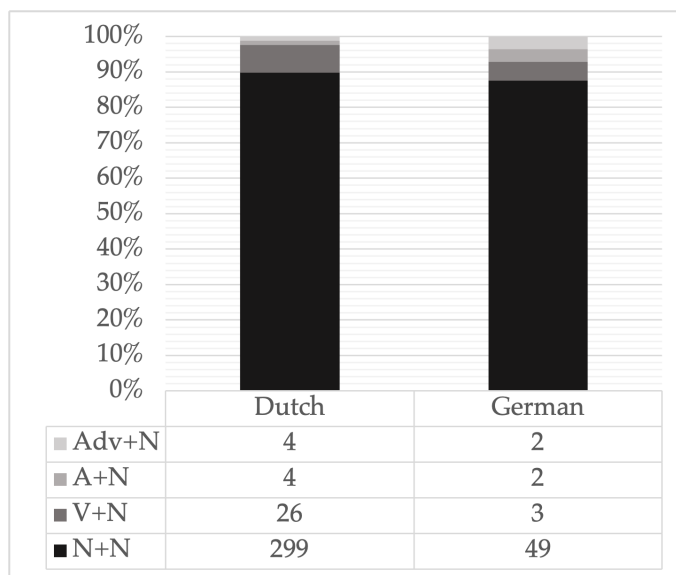


Figure 5.6: Patterns of compounding with *Frau* and *vrouw* in MoG and MoD data.

¹²⁰Onymic use in German is often transparently marked by the linking element *-s-*, e.g., *Bäckersfrau* ‘baker’s wife’, *Pfarrersfrau* ‘pastor’s wife’, which in this case transparently stems from the preposed genitive (e.g., *des.GEN Pfarrers.GEN Frau* ‘the wife of the pastor’).

5.4 Summary

The main conclusion concerning the development of feminisation patterns in Dutch and German is that the German suffix *-in* fulfills each function that in Dutch is fulfilled by a set of different suffixes. There are instances of *-in* in agentive *er*-derivates in MD (twelve in total, e.g., *troosterin* ‘consoler.F’, *verraderin* ‘traitor.F’, *naaierin* ‘sewer.F’), but they have not lasted diachronically. Rather, the rise in productivity of *-ster* may explain why *-in* is no longer present in these contexts. In German, on the other hand, *-in* has experienced an analogical context expansion. Moreover, its use in agentive contexts with *er*-derivates was already a prominent feature of MHG *-in*, and it was found in 36 different such types (40% of types). The diversity of the Dutch feminisation landscape and the influence from French (*-e*, *-es*) set it apart from the homogeneous German feminisation system. Given that *-in* has diachronically acquired the functions which in Dutch are shared between different feminisation patterns, it is not surprising that loan words quickly adapt to *-in*, and that non-native patterns are replaced by it (e.g., *-euse*). With regards to transparency, thus, the German feminisation system is more prototypically inflection-like than the Dutch system.

The most productive suffix in MoD, *-ster*, substitutes *-er* in most cases, and is added to *-aar* and *-ier*. It is not only the most frequent suffix on the type level, but also on the token level. Dutch *-in* has high token frequencies, making it a salient feminising suffix (cf. the idea of linguistic materialisation through frequent re-iteration). This, in combination with the fact that it occurs on masculine bases which themselves are no derivatives (e.g., masculines in *-er*), may explain why it is productive in informal (chat) language in so-called nonce words (Bauer 2001: 38) or metalinguistically reflected occasionalisms. Like the regionally restricted patterns *-ersse*, *-egge*, *-nede* and supraregionally distributed *-es*, the suffix *-in* is phonotactically salient, because it is stressed. Hence, only *-ster* and *-e* are unstressed. Inhabitant names are a peculiar domain in that within these semantics, one pattern is (very) productive, namely de-adjectival *-se*. In the case study in Chapter 6 it will be investigated whether, and if so, to what extent neutralisation has had an impact on the productivity of feminisation patterns in Dutch. As the study by Kopf (2023) suggests, feminisation through

-in has always been the default in reference to women, already in OHG. The following chapter will thus investigate the use of feminising morphology (not only *-in*) in predicative contexts in Dutch in contrast with German.

6 Feminisation in animate contexts

The case study in this chapter is intended to substantiate the claim made in the previous chapters, namely that the functional status of feminisation in the Dutch language system is distinct from its status in the German system. Formal factors that corroborate this claim have been investigated and described in the case study in the previous chapter. This present corpus study builds on those premises and addresses one factor in particular: obligatoriness. By means of multiple corpora, it will be investigated whether a PN is consistently feminised in [female] contexts, and, if PNs are not consistently feminised in these contexts, which circumstances are needed for feminisation to occur. Consistent feminisation in these specific contexts can be considered an instance of obligatory sex marking, and it questions the idea that feminised items and their non-feminised counterparts share a relation of markedness. In line with the theoretical framework in which the present corpus study takes place, obligatoriness of feminisation is considered emergent, i.e., emerging from language use. Language use itself is a multi-level concept, with each discourse being embedded in a set of new context-bound rules. One such level is that of language use(rs) following norms or guidelines, as for example in newspapers and other news media. Of interest here are such guidelines that were introduced in Chapter 4, i.e., guidelines concerning gender-fair language use, in the form of neutralisation or differentiation policies. These are known to be in operation in certain Dutch news media, and were associated with language use in GDR news media. Possibly, however, neutralisation can be cancelled out by interfering intra- and extra-linguistic factors. These include referent-tracking and other referential and contextual components, emphasising female sex, the semantics of the PN, the lexicalisation degree of the feminised noun, the language's gender system.

The impact of these forces will be investigated here, in order to describe and explain different manifestations of feminisation through time – and space. The purpose is to obtain an insight into the state of the art of feminisation in Dutch and German standard language use and the developments which have led to it so far. Based on the factors that contribute to the productivity of feminisation, and which were described in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, Dutch and

German are subdividable into two regions. The first division is based on systemic differences, which place Northern Dutch, Southern Dutch, and German on a morphological cline. This runs from most gender marking with preservation of the M/F-distinction (German) to least gender marking with loss of a M/F-distinction (Northern Dutch), whereby Southern Dutch is situated in the middle (cf. Section 3.1.1). In accordance with diverging views on gender-sensitive language use and its accompanying strategies/guidelines, four different language areas are investigated: Northern and Southern Dutch are separately considered, based on systemic preconditions and the presence (North) and absence (South) of clearly defined neutralisation guidelines concerning gender-fair language use. East and West German are isolated from each other between 1945 and 1990, based on diverging ideological conceptions of gender-fair language use. These factors are shown in Fig. 6.1 below. Section 6.2 deals with gender-marking in Dutch and Flemish news media, contrasting the exponents of the aforementioned different grammatical prerequisites and language policies. Section 6.3 covers German.

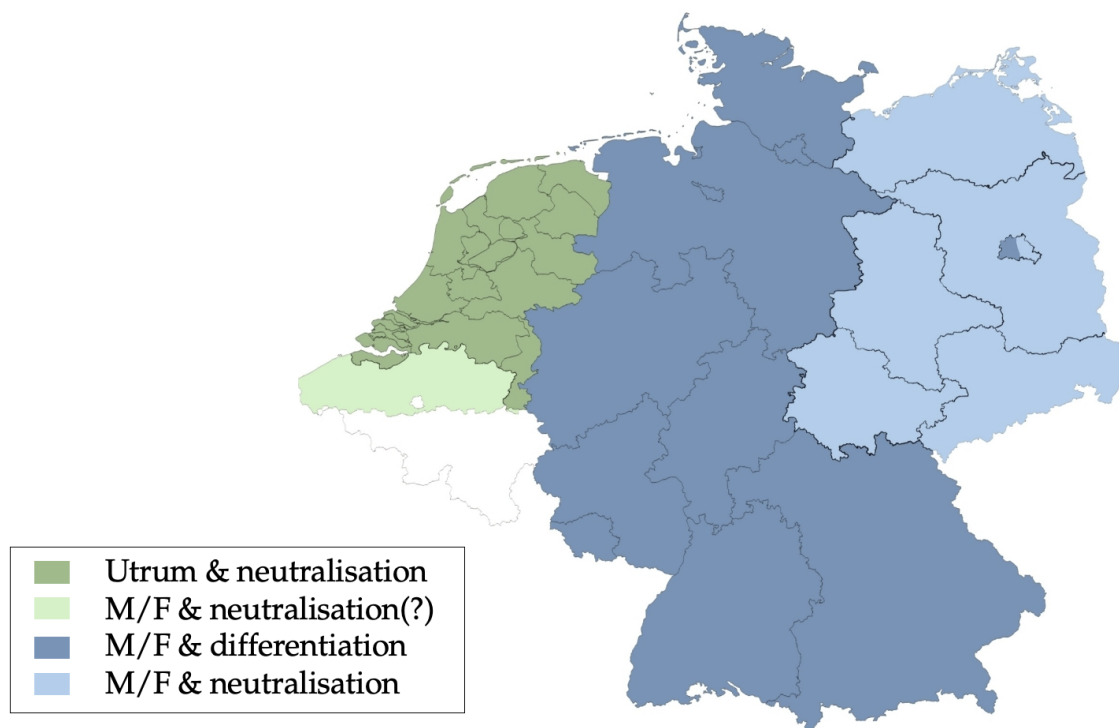


Figure 6.1: Dutch and German regions from which news media were included in the corpus study, divided by gender system and language policy.

In line with the theoretical premises outlined in the previous chapters, the following hypotheses are proposed. Each of these hypotheses relates to one of the variables that presumably interact with (the productivity of) feminisation:

I. Referentiality (cf. Chapter 2)

The role of referentiality is implicit in that non-referentiality creates the “right” environment for neutralisation to be effective, whereas referentiality itself may hamper neutralisation policies and favour differentiation. Feminisation in contexts which are not referential (where it does not serve referent-tracking) is considered an exponent of its highly productive and obligatory-like, i.e., inherent inflection-like, use.

II. Gender (cf. Chapter 3)

Feminisation likely correlates with the preservation of masculine/feminine gender distinctions. Based on this idea, German should make use of feminisation the most and Northern Dutch the least, with Flemish in the middle.

III. Language policy (cf. Chapter 4)

- a. Various calls for neutralisation in the Netherlands, starting in the 1980s and with renewed explicit anti-feminisation policies as of 2016, have contributed to the decline of feminisation altogether.
- b. An orientation toward the Netherlandic Dutch Standard in Flanders may influence the use of feminisation. It is, however, likely, that Flemish standard language use, for a lack of a clear neutralisation policy in any news medium, has its own peculiarities.
- c. Neutralisation may have had a negative effect on feminisation in East German news media, although the effect may have been mitigated by the conservative gender system and a long-standing tradition to differentiate. If there was a significant effect, it presumably subsided after 1990.
- d. Differentiation is expected to be the default in West German data, both before and after 1990.

Hence, there are two conceivable outcomes for feminisation: it either becomes the norm, or its use is restricted to some items only. This study will not only focus on the idea of “obligatory” feminisation, but will also deal with the exact implications of a possible decline of feminisation for the system itself.

Apart from these general hypotheses concerning grammatical gender and language policies, the following sections are also dedicated to the more specific characteristics of developments within the productivity of feminisation. The following hypotheses are therefore concerned with the concrete impact on the characteristics of the feminisation systems in Dutch and German, as a consequence of diverging gender systems and language policies:

- I. Unproductive patterns are not affected by neutralisation policies, because unproductive feminising morphology nearly restrictedly occurs in PNs that are more or less lexicalised as such. Neutralisation affects mostly productive patterns, which in Dutch are *-ster* and *-e*.
- II. The semantics of PNs play a role in whether they are still feminised under the influence of a neutralisation policy. PNs which highlight female sex should be less easily neutralisable than PNs with a more sex-neutral meaning.
- III. In a highly productive feminisation system, PNs that are at first difficult to feminise over time join the inventory of feminisable and feminised PNs.

The following sections provide an overview of the sources from which the data stems, corpora through which they were retrieved, and the methods used for analysis.

6.1 Corpus and method

6.1.1 News media sources

6.1.1.1 Netherlands & Flanders For the Netherlands, the five largest nationwide published newspapers were investigated: *NRC Handelsblad* (NRC), *De Volkskrant* (VK), *Trouw* (TR), *De Telegraaf* (DT), *Algemeen Dagblad* (AD). Likewise, for Dutch-speaking Belgium,

the five largest nationwide published news media were analysed: *De Morgen* (formerly *De Vooruit*) (DM), *De Standaard* (DS), *Het Laatste Nieuws* (HLN), *Het Nieuwsblad* (HN), and *Knack* (KN). Since data from Belgium is harder to retrieve due to copyright restrictions, there is a data gap between 1950 and 2006 (cf. methods section below). Data from each news medium was analysed from its founding date until 2020.¹²¹

The scope of the Netherlandic Dutch and Flemish corpus study comprises nearly two centuries of data from Dutch newspapers, starting in 1828 (the founding year of the oldest newspaper in the group, NRC) and ending in 2020. Fig. 6.2 gives an overview of the availability of all news media in corpora. A short description of each medium is given below.

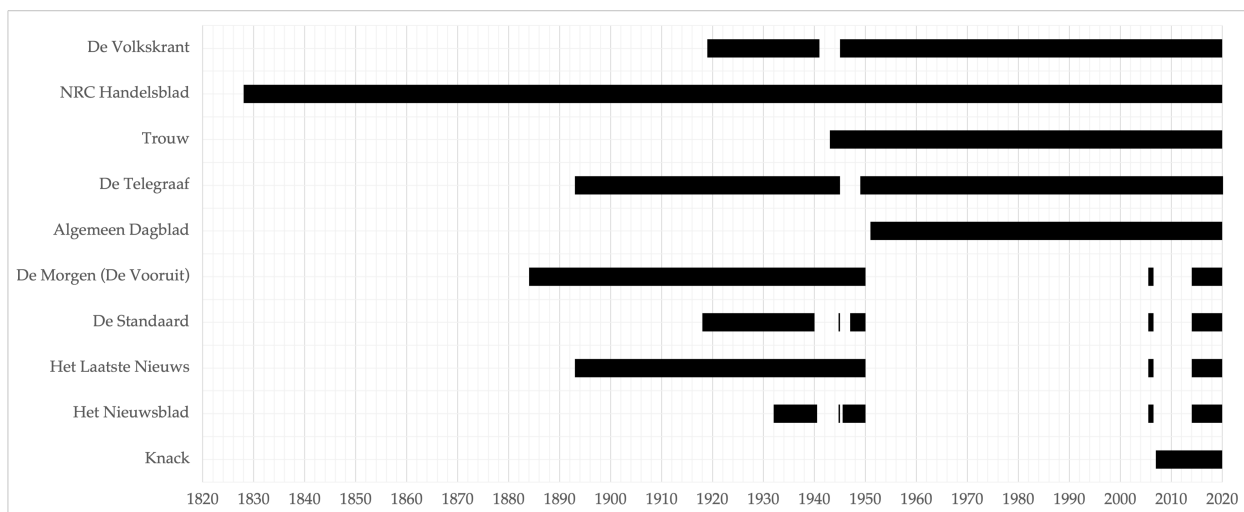


Figure 6.2: Availability of Dutch and Flemish corpus data per news medium.

NRC Handelsblad (NRC) *NRC Handelsblad* is the result of the 1970 fusion of *Algemeen Handelsblad*, founded in 1828, and *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, founded in 1844. All issues of both newspapers from before 1970, and all NRC issues from after that year will henceforth be considered NRC issues. Before its relocation to Amsterdam in 2012, it was headquartered in Rotterdam. Its self-proclaimed motto *Lux et Libertas* – ‘Light and Freedom’ – gives away its ideological, liberal affiliation. The newspaper published a revision of its Code in 2017:¹²²

¹²¹Data were collected in 2021.

¹²²<https://nrccode.nrc.nl/onze-beginselen> [Accessed 22-11-2022].

De term ‘liberaal’ is hier gebruikt in de negentiende-eeuwse betekenis: ‘liberalen’ keerden zich destijds tegen de traditionele macht van adel en kerk, streeden voor burgerrechten en vrijhandel, vastgelegd in grondwetten, met grondrechten.¹²³

Since 2016, the NRC has also maintained a neutralisation guideline (de Jong 2018).

De Volkskrant (VK) *De Volkskrant* was founded as a Catholic newspaper for the labour movement in 1919. It is published daily. In the 1960s, it started to focus on a broader public, removing its heading *Katholiek Dagblad voor Nederland* (‘Catholic Newspaper for the Netherlands’) in 1965. The then-Chairman of the Supervisory Board of VK, Toon Middelhuis, declared the following:

Dit etiket [Katholiek Dagblad] deed ons nog teveel denken aan een voorbije periode, het sloot ons ook teveel af van de grote groep die ons wel nastaat in, aan de rand en buiten ‘t katholieke kamp, maar afgestoten werd door dat etiket. We willen niets verloochenen, alleen de krant meer open maken en nog minder binden aan een bepaalde groep.¹²⁴

(‘Ondertitel “katholiek dagblad” weggelaten. “De Volkskrant” opende nieuwbouw.’ *Limburgs Dagblad*, 27 September 1965)

The VK has since been regarded as a more progressive newspaper (cf. *Volkskrant Archief*¹²⁵). Like the NRC, it maintains a neutralisation guideline since 2016 (cf. “Stijlboek”, *De Volkskrant* 2023).

¹²³“The term ‘liberal’ is used here in the sense of the nineteenth century: ‘liberals’ at that time turned against the traditional power of nobility and church, strived for civil rights and free trade, which were established in constitutions, containing fundamental rights.” [N.V.]

¹²⁴“This label [Catholic newspaper] still reminded us too much about a period which is now gone, it also excluded us too much from the larger group which is favourably predisposed toward us, in, around and outside of the Catholic movement, but was repelled by that label. We do not want to renounce anything, we just want to open the newspaper more, and bind ourselves less to one specific group.” [N.V.]

¹²⁵<https://volkskrant-archieff.nl/de-geschiedenis-van-de-volkskrant> [Accessed 22-11-2022].

Trouw (TR) *Trouw* is a daily newspaper published six days a week, with headquarters in Amsterdam. Founded during the Second World War in 1943, it began as an illegal newspaper in resistance against the German occupation in the Netherlands. While the newspaper did not have an affiliation with any so-called pillar of Dutch society, it changed its orientation toward Protestantism after 1945. *Trouw* ascribes its ideals and favoured news subjects to this Christian tradition (*Trouw*, 5 June 2019¹²⁶). Together with the NRC and VK, TR is considered a newspaper of record. TR has not published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

De Telegraaf (DT) Founded in 1893, *De Telegraaf* is published six days a week. It is the largest newspaper in the Netherlands and, as opposed to the NRC, VK, and TR, it is considered a tabloid. In contrast with other Dutch newspapers, DT had an ambivalent role during the Second World War. While it had been critical of the German occupation in the first phase of the war, it published Nazi propaganda in the second phase – something other newspapers had refused to do. Thus, it was able to continue openly publishing during WWII, while other newspapers were forbidden during that time. As a consequence, DT lost its publishing permit in the following post-war years. DT has neither published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

Algemeen Dagblad (AD) *Algemeen Dagblad*, known from 2005 onwards only as *AD*, was founded in 1946. As a fellow tabloid it is the main competitor to DT. AD has communicated in personal correspondence that it does pay some attention to neutralisation, but that feminised forms are not rigorously edited and neutralised. Its policy is thereby less strict than that of NRC and VK.

De Morgen/De Vooruit (DM) *De Morgen* was founded as a continuation of the socialist newspaper *De Vooruit* in 1978. The latter was founded in 1884. As a result of the 1978 shutdown of *De Vooruit*, the left-wing public had been left without its own news

¹²⁶<https://www.trouw.nl/achter-de-schermen/over-ons~b7aea298/> [Accessed 22-11-2022].

medium, and *De Morgen* took over this function. Having been connected with the SP (*Socialistische Partij* ‘Socialist Party’), the two separated in 1986 as ideological views of the editorial staff were no longer aligned with the Flemish socialist party. While the paper is not officially affiliated with a political party, DM states that it wished to present itself as “modern, progressive, and open-minded” (*De Morgen*, 28 October 2022¹²⁷). Its main purpose is high-quality investigative journalism (ibid.). It is headquartered in Antwerp. DM has not published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

De Standaard (DS) Much like DM, *De Standaard* is a newspaper of editorial repute, founded in 1918 and headquartered in Brussels. Its existence is closely linked with the Flemish Movement and as such distinguishes itself politically from DM. It was originally founded to serve as a mouthpiece for Flemish intellectuals, who felt that the Flemish people needed their own newspaper. Through DS, they were able to emphasise their emancipatory demands such as education and administration in Flemish (“Geschiedenis De Standaard”, *De Standaard*¹²⁸). After DS went bankrupt in 1976, it was bought by Flemish industrialists and continued its course as a newspaper that stood for the Christian and Flemish causes, free economy, and pluralistic democracy (ibid.). DS has neither published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

Het Laatste Nieuws (HLN) *Het Laatste Nieuws*, founded in 1888 and headquartered in Brussels, is linked with liberal and Flemish-nationalist ideology. It is a tabloid and currently the largest Flemish newspaper. Its editor-in-chief, Brecht Decaesstecker, has been quoted in stating that “if something happens about which Flanders talks about, then you immediately experience it in HLN” (DPG Media Group¹²⁹). HLN has neither published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

¹²⁷<https://www.demorgen.be/achter-de-schermen/de-geschiedenis-van-de-morgen> [Accessed 22-11-2022].

¹²⁸<https://www.standaard.be/over> [Accessed 22-11-2022].

¹²⁹<https://www.dpgmediagroup.com/nl-BE/hetlaatstenieuws> [22-11-2022].

Het Nieuwsblad (NB) *Het Nieuwsblad* was founded by *De Standaard* in 1929, with a target audience of lower-income Flemish people. It is considered a tabloid newspaper, like its Dutch counterparts DT and AD. NB has neither published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

Knack (KN) *Knack* is a weekly published magazine with a left-wing affiliation that was founded in 1971 as the Flemish counterpart to news magazines such as *Time Magazine* and *Der Spiegel* (“Eurotopics”, *Knack*, 14 June 2023). KN has neither published nor communicated any statements concerning neutralisation.

6.1.1.2 Germany Next to some nationwide published German news media, a number of regional newspapers were analysed as well. This is due to the fact that during the existence of the GDR, there was only one nationally distributed newspaper, *Neues Deutschland* (ND), while all other news media, which are available in corpora, were/are local. Another GDR newspaper with good corpus availability is *Berliner Zeitung* (BZ), a local Berlin newspaper. *Der Tagesspiegel* (TS) is the West Berlin counterpart newspaper to BZ. To get an impression of the situation in former GDR newspapers after 1990, two East German local news media were analysed as well: *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten* (PNN) and *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (DNN). Two nationally published FRG newspapers, the only media which are unrestrictedly available in corpora from their founding dates onwards, are *Der Spiegel* (SP) and *Die Zeit* (DZ). Availabilities in corpora are displayed in Fig. 6.3, along with some short descriptions of the respective media below.

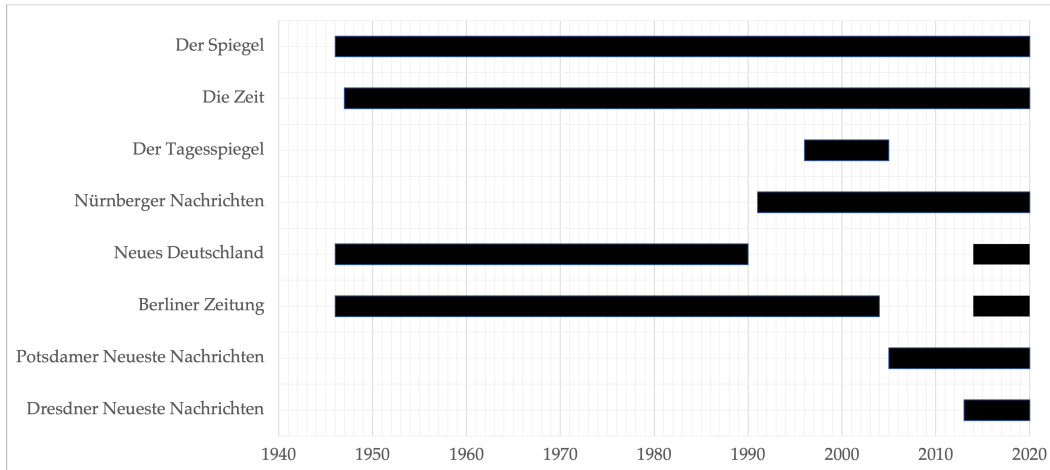


Figure 6.3: Corpus availability of German newspapers

Der Spiegel (SP) Founded in 1947, the news magazine *Der Spiegel* was first headquartered in Hannover before it moved to Hamburg in 1952 (“Die Geschichte der Spiegel-Gruppe”, *Der Spiegel*¹³⁰). SP became most famous for its media coverage of political corruption scandals and is currently known for its in-depth reporting on political and social subjects to date. It is published in print weekly, and online on a daily basis. Ideologically, it is oriented towards the left-liberal spectrum.¹³¹

Die Zeit (DZ) *Die Zeit* was founded in 1946. It is headquartered in Hamburg, and published weekly in paper form, alongside daily online publications. It is one of Germany’s most read newspapers and has the “highbrow” reputation of being the news medium for academics and intellectuals. Starting off with a mixture of conservative and liberal editors, its main ideological affiliation from the end of the 1950s onward is liberalism (“1946 beginnt die neue ‘Zeit’”, *NDR*¹³²).

Der Tagesspiegel (TS) *Der Tagesspiegel* is the most-read daily newspaper in Berlin. It was founded in 1945 as the first post-war Berlin news medium. It was the main newspaper

¹³⁰<https://gruppe.spiegel.de/unternehmen/historie> [Accessed 06-03-2023].

¹³¹<https://www.eurotopics.net/de/148789/der-spiegel> [Accessed 06-03-2023].

¹³²<https://www.ndr.de/geschichte/chronologie/Die-Zeit-Die-Geschichte-einer-Wochenzeitung,zeit274.html> [Accessed 06-03-2023].

for West Berlin throughout the Berlin partition until 1990, and it is still mostly read in the western part of the city to date (*Berliner Zeitung* is still most popular in East Berlin).

Neues Deutschland (ND) ND was founded in 1946 as the official party paper of the SED. It has since existed as a leftist news medium which, in its own words “represents the interests of the marginalised and fights against racism, classism, antisemitism, sexism, and fascism” (*nd-aktuell*, 14 June 2023).

Berliner Zeitung (BZ) BZ was founded in 1945 in Berlin and first published by the Soviet Union – at this point it was still available in both East and West Berlin. After the Berlin Blockade, starting in 1948, its publication was restricted to the East Berlin area. In 1953, BZ was mandated to the Central Committee of the SED, thereby becoming a state-owned, published, and controlled newspaper. In contrast to *Neues Deutschland*, news coverage in BZ was somewhat more liberal, as the newspaper was no party organ:

“Wir waren so ein bisschen an der längeren Leine. Und die Zeitung war ausgesprochen beliebt wegen ihrer Lokalberichterstattung und wegen der kulturellen Berichte. Und da fand man schon auch Dinge, die so im etwas steiferen *Neuen Deutschland* nicht standen. Allerdings der politische Korridor, was man durfte und was man nicht durfte, der war natürlich auch sehr beschränkt.”¹³³

(Maritta Tkalec, BZ editor, interview with *DLF*, 21-05-2020¹³⁴)

BZ was published in East Berlin until 1990, and since then it has become the second most-read Berlin newspaper, after the West Berlin newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*. It is nevertheless still mostly read in formerly East Berlin areas and is politically leftist-liberal.¹³⁵

¹³³“We were a little bit on a longer leash. And the newspaper was downright popular due to its local news coverage and cultural reports. And one could find things that would not be published in the somewhat stiffer ‘Neues Deutschland’. But the political corridor, what was allowed and what was not, that was of course very limited as well.” [N.V.]

¹³⁴<https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/75-jahre-berliner-zeitung-erste-ausgabe-aus-dem-zerbombten-100.html> [Accessed 06-03-2023].

¹³⁵<https://www.eurotopics.net/de/148789/der-spiegel> [Accessed 06-03-2023].

Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten (PNN) PNN was founded in 1951 as a daily newspaper of the NDPD (National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands, ‘National-Democratic Party of Germany’), which supported the SED. It started as a regional newspaper for the state Brandenburg and was purchased by *Tagesspiegel* in 1991. Thus, since then its editorial staff is West German influenced.

Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten (DNN) DNN was founded in 1990, and it thus never had a direct ideological affiliation to the SED. It is a regional daily newspaper in Saxony.

6.1.2 PNs in predicative constructions

Before turning to the research methods, this section is concerned with the data searched for in the above discussed news media. The host constructions for finding PNs with female referents are the following:

- a. Dutch: [PRO_{SG.FEM.} V{*zijn*}_{3.P.SG.} NP] → *zij/ze is een [...] X*
- b. German: [PRO_{SG.FEM.} V{*sein*}_{3.P.SG.} N] → *sie ist X*

In the outcome construction X is thus syntactically N, a variable PN, and it constitutes an NP with adnominal elements in Dutch only; in German it is a bare N (cf. below). The feminine pronoun covers the [+female] semantics of its referent. As the predicative construction is merely a host for PNs with non-referential functions, the results will only deal with the PNs found within these constructions; one PN is one token.

As outlined before (cf. Section 2.3.2), predicatives are lowest on the referentiality scale in that they do not refer on their own (Kotthoff & Nübling 2018: 93), but are coreferential with their controller, the subject (Croft 2013: 99). Because predicatives merely share a referent with their subjects, but do not have their own referential role, they constitute contexts in which feminisation is less likely to occur, because it is not relevant for referent-tracking. The advantage of non-referential contexts in tracking developments within the feminisation system in both Dutch and German is twofold. On the one hand, since feminisation in these

contexts is semantically redundant, they will likely be the first contexts to abandon gender marking, which makes them useful for describing the nature of the changes taking place. On the other hand, if feminisation is highly productive in a variety, then it is likely to occur in non-referential contexts as well. Feminisation thereby covers every domain in which it can possibly occur, namely every domain in which a referent is female, regardless of whether gender marking is redundant or not.

With regards to the purpose of this corpus study, it is predicted that German PNs are preferably gender-marked, as stated above, regardless of the syntactic-pragmatic context in which they appear. This preference is strengthened both by the sex-based semantics of the German gender system and by decades of feminist language reform. Because of their low referentiality degree, predicatives are very suitable contexts for assessing the productivity and inflectional degree of gender marking: if gender marking (i.e., feminisation) appears even in non-referential contexts, then it can be regarded as nearing obligatoriness and therefore grammaticality. In light of gender marking in Dutch, it is assumed that the process is in decline, and further advanced through the help of neutralisation language policies. Thus, referentiality serves as the notion by which diachronic change can be tested. A decrease in gender morphology will likely occur along the lines of the referentiality scale, starting in predicative contexts and further advancing toward highly referential contexts, e.g., subject position or vocatives.

6.1.2.1 Full *zij* and reduced *ze* The Dutch pronominal system has both full and reduced pronouns. This is also the case for third person singular feminine personal pronouns, full *zij* and reduced, or attenuated, *ze*. Through changes in the Dutch gender system (cf. Section 3.1.1), the feminine pronoun became mostly restricted to the [+human,+female] domain, while in the [-human] domain gender changes have led to “the promotion of the feminine pronoun to a marker of high style” (Audring 2009: 47-48). In person reference, both *zij* and *ze* are still in use. *Zij* and *ze* are spread over different contexts. First, the e-ANS¹³⁶ mentions contrastive use of *zij*, as in (58):

¹³⁶<https://e-ans.ivdnt.org/topics/pid/ans050207lingtopic> [Accessed 02-03-2023].

- (58) Hij gelooft het wel, maar **zij** gelooft er niks van.
he believes it MOD but she believes there nothing of
'He believes it, but she believes nothing of it.'

In (58) the pronoun *zij* is used to contrast another referent. The full pronoun *zij* is always emphasised, whereas its reduced counterpart *ze* never is.

Next, it has been argued that reduced or attenuated pronouns such as Dutch *ze* are linked to highly accessible referents. The notion of accessibility refers to the “degree of activation of the conceptualisations, or mental representations, of referents in memory” (Vogels, Krahmer & Maes 2019: 338). Hence, accessibility means cognitive accessibility, or, building on Sperber & Wilson (1986: Chapter 3), the availability of contexts at any moment in discourse. In this context, Ariel (1990) assesses the accessibility degrees of different linguistic elements such as demonstratives and pronouns. The result is an accessibility scale, where pronouns are altogether enlisted as highly accessible, but where stressed pronouns are assessed as less accessible than attenuated ones (Ariel 1990: 71). Higher accessibility is linked to certain characteristics of referents, of which animacy is one: “the more animate a conceptual representation of a referent is, the more attenuated the expression referring to that referent will be” (Vogels, Maes & Krahmer 2014: 105). This is in line with Ariel’s findings that attenuated expressions, in this case reduced third-person pronouns, have a higher accessibility than their full counterparts. Vogels, Krahmer & Maes (2013: 6) find that the animacy of the referent can contribute to its perceptual salience, which in turn gives way to pronominalisation. Thus, pronominalisation, especially attenuated pronouns, is a linguistic reflection of a high degree of accessibility for the referent in the context.

Animacy is, however, not the main feature which accounts for the distributions of full *zij* and reduced *ze* in Dutch:

On the production side, the choice to pronominalize may be most sensitive to the referent's accessibility or salience, while the choice between full and reduced forms is more sensitive to importance or newsworthiness of information, at least in Dutch.

(Vogels, Maes & Krahmer 2014: 118)

A human or animate referent will be more likely to be pronominalised rather than be referred to by means of, e.g., demonstratives or full NPs (since animates are more accessible or salient). The actual choice for one or the other pronoun is not based on animacy or saliency of the referent. In “regular” contexts, in spoken language, where the pronoun is neither emphasised nor highly newsworthy, the choice will be attenuated *ze*. The unmarked feminine third person pronoun in Dutch is attenuated *ze*, and the use of *zij* is marked according to information structure and contrast. In sum, because Dutch offers two different pronouns where only one is available in German, an effect of the attenuation of the pronoun on feminisation is not ruled out. If there is an effect, the expectation is that there is more feminisation in contexts with full *zij* than with reduced *ze*, because theoretically the referent is cognitively less accessible in the presence of a full pronoun. In that case, feminisation may serve as a means of referent-tracking.

6.1.2.2 Indefinite article The German construction [*sie ist* N], as opposed to the Dutch one [*zij/ze is* NP], does not contain an indefinite article. Importantly, the presence or absence of an article does not change the status of the PN in the construction as a predicative. Hence, the constructions are comparable with regards to referentiality, and this enables a general comparison of the productivity of feminisation in Dutch and German within the same contexts. For both systems, the constructions, regardless of their minimal differences, meet the theoretical research conditions.

The predicative constructions are formally slightly different, not only because of practical reasons, but also because of systemic differences. As seen above, Dutch and Flemish newspapers are only restrictedly accessible and they are not annotated. Since the verb *zijn* ‘to

be', in its multi-functionality, serves not only as a copular verb, but also as a main verb and an auxiliary, the search string *zij/ze is* would generate an unmanageable amount of results. Even as a copular verb, *zijn* allows for a wide range of predicative continuations, which include relevant PNs, but also adjectives and adverbials (e.g., *ze is mooi* 'she is beautiful'; *ze is binnen* 'she is inside'). The indefinite article facilitates a corpus search by narrowing the construction down to a copular one connecting the pronoun to a noun. Although the results yielded from the corpus also contain junk data for a large part, the construction is nevertheless manageable. Some irrelevant results were left out and will be discussed in the following section. Since the Dutch data had to be sorted out by hand either way, constructions containing linguistic material between the verb and the PN, such as adjectives (e.g., *ze is een hardwerkende cafébazin* 'she is a hardworking bar owner.F'), were left in the data. In terms of predicative constructions, German behaves somewhat differently. The Dutch indefinite article in predicatives is comparable to that in English, and is more grammaticalised than in German (Szczepaniak 2011: 85). Presumably due to this, the constructions containing an article in German initially searched for were strikingly infrequent. Therefore, the German constructions were restricted to PNs directly following the verb *ist*, which were clearly more frequent and thus more usable for an analysis requiring a larger data set. The results from two contrastive samples illustrate this difference and further support the choice for the German articleless construction: in the period 2000-2009, *Der Spiegel* contains 67 constructions of the form [*sie ist eine(e) N*] compared to 137 – more than double as much – constructions of the form [*sie ist N*]. The same limitation applies to earlier periods and other news media, from which samples were also taken. In sum, the higher-frequency construction contains an article in Dutch but lacks one in German. For the purposes of this study, this formal difference is negligible.

Systemically, the German gender system is connected with sex, as the latter is the semantic core of the former in the realm of animate referents (cf. the discussion in Section 3.1.2). The absence of an indefinite article in German predicative constructions is further preferred because gender is marked on the article. Therefore, the advantage of an articleless

PN is that there are no further semantic sex cues in the construction, which might heighten the likelihood of feminisation occurring on the PN. The Dutch indefinite article *een*, by contrast, does not carry any gender information, as it is the article for both the utrum and the neuter inflection, and there is no masculine/feminine distinction on articles regardless. To exclude gender cues that may influence the choice for or against feminisation, a bare noun (the PN) in German comes closest to the Dutch construction, which carries an article (for practical reasons, as outlined above). Hence, for both systems, a construction that comes maximally close to a context in which feminisation is least necessary is guaranteed by the chosen patterns.

6.1.2.3 Personal nouns The working definition of a PN includes all nouns with a human referent, except for a range of nouns with characteristics that were discussed in Chapter 2. First, all epicene nouns, including nominalised adjectives, can be ruled out (for examples, cf. Section 2.1.2), as well as all nouns whose referent's sex is lexically determined, including hybrid nouns. Even gender-specific nouns such as Dutch *sopraan* 'soprano', which refers to a female singing voice and is metonymically extended to a person, sometimes occur feminised as *soprane*.¹³⁷ Such nouns are thus excluded from the data as well, even though they are feminised, because they are sex-specific and behave like nouns such as *bruid* 'bride' and *moeder* 'mother'.

On a last note, feminised PNs can be used to refer to personified institutions:

- (59) [Die Bank.] Sie ist **Vertreterin** unserer Interessen.
 the.FEM bank.FEM she is representative.F of.our interests
 'The bank is the representative of our interests.'

The data considered for the purposes of this study are only PNs denoting women, so non-human and inanimate referents are excluded. Gender marking in inanimate contexts will be discussed in Chapter 7.

¹³⁷In this case, the noun is feminised, perhaps exactly in order to distinguish it from its [-human] source, or because the ending *-aan* is homophonous with the masculine word-formation suffix *-aan*, which may have led to its reinterpretation as a masculine suffix in a feminisable noun.

6.1.3 Data collection in various corpora

The newspapers investigated have varying degrees of accessibility and therefore varying research options. Corpus research methods are outlined below.

6.1.3.1 Archives of the Dutch Royal Library Dutch news media issues are searchable from their founding dates until 1995 through the freely available Delpher corpus. The Delpher website, however, is only suitable for simple searches and browsing individual news media issues. It is not tagged, and due to copyright restrictions there is no bulk download option. Dutch newspaper issues pre-1995 were therefore accessed via the digitised archives that are stored on the servers of the Royal Library (*Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, KB) at The Hague, by using APIs. Each separate news article is stored on the KB servers as a single downloadable XML file, each with its own URL. Within the appropriate API parameters (news medium, period, search query), the servers were searched for all occurrences of the strings *zij/Zij is een* and *ze/Ze is een* in XML files (i.e., news articles) and these were then downloaded. The sentences in which these strings occurred were extracted from their articles using a Python script, and noise data was manually filtered out. This process was repeated for the five Dutch newspapers that were introduced above and for each decade, starting from their respective founding dates. The search had to be divided into smaller chunks of one decade each, because the results generated on the KB servers are restricted to 1000 per search command.

There is no information available about the number of tokens that Delpher contains for each of the investigated newspapers, but there is information about the number of issues per year that are available in Delpher. Thus, it is not possible to make any statements about the results from each Dutch news medium in relation to corpus size. Nonetheless, the graphs below present a visualised overview of the number of newspaper issues by year and medium in Delpher.¹³⁸ NRC is divided into *Algemeen Handelsblad* and *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant/NRC* in Fig. 6.4 and 6.7. Each green bar represents the 300- or 600-issue mark. For example, for VK, TR and AD, the number of published issues per year contained in Delpher is around

¹³⁸Figures available via: <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten> [Accessed and downloaded 22-11-2022].

300 for the periods seen in the figures. NRC and DT issue more newspapers per year on average (at times more than 600), although this does not state anything about the size of these issues, i.e., the corpus size.

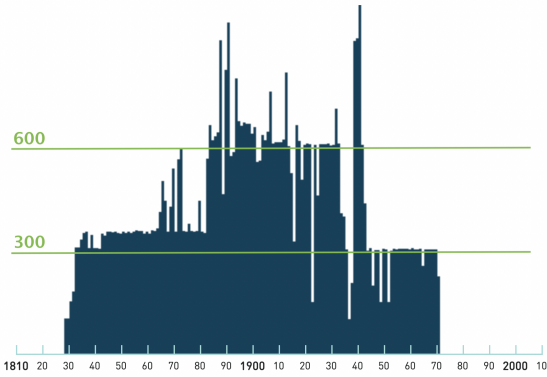


Figure 6.4: *Algemeen Handelsblad* in Delpher

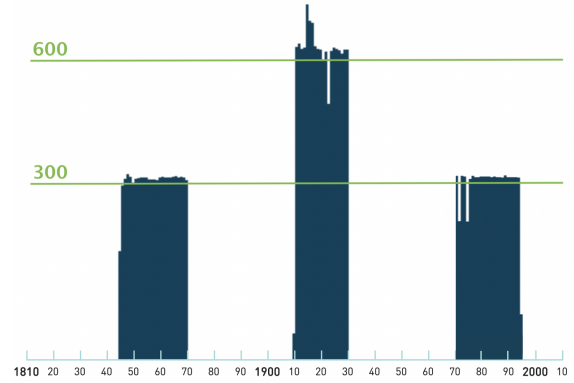


Figure 6.7: *NRC* in Delpher

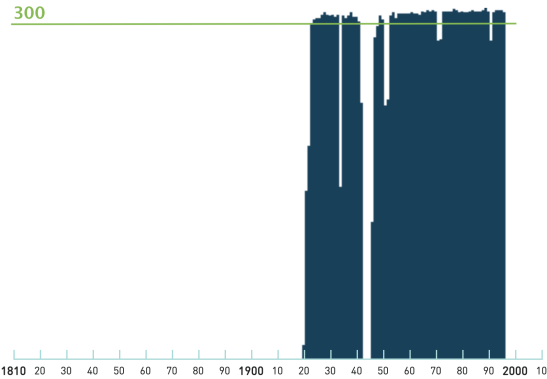


Figure 6.5: *De Volkskrant* in Delpher

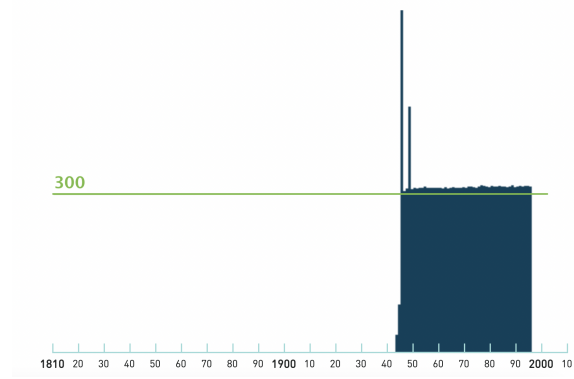


Figure 6.8: *Trouw* in Delpher

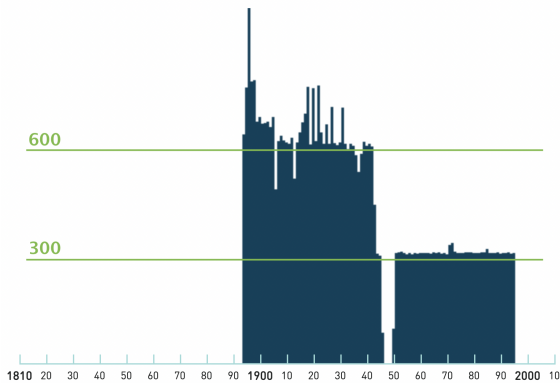


Figure 6.6: *De Telegraaf* in Delpher

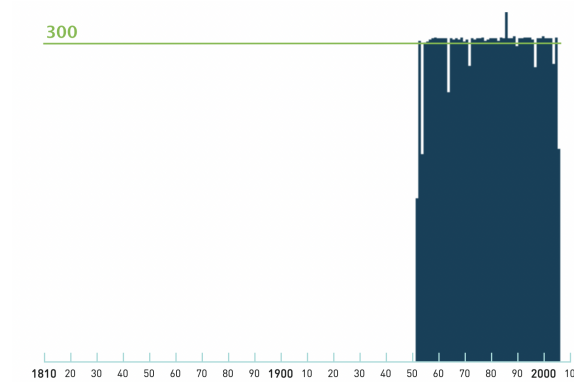


Figure 6.9: *Algemeen Dagblad* in Delpher

6.1.3.2 NexisUni by LexisNexis NexisUni is a research database provided by LexisNexis, a commercial data and analytics company that collects multiple sources of information and provides it primarily for legal research,¹³⁹ although it is also valuable for other research purposes. Dutch news media from 1995 onwards are provided in the NexisUni database, leaving out freelance contributions but including op-eds. The strings *zij is een* and *ze is een* were searched for, and irrelevant data was sorted out. The Belgian data from KN were also retrieved through the NexisUni database, which contains KN data starting in 2007.

6.1.3.3 Archives of the Belgian Royal Library Accessibility problems with Belgian news media are comparable to those encountered with Dutch news media. Moreover, Belgian copyright law restricts access to news media data from 1950 onwards. Digitised files of the four investigated Flemish newspapers, which are managed by the Belgian Royal Library in Brussels (*Koninklijke Bibliotheek Brussel*, KBR), were directly sent to me in XML format. The subsequent search method within these XML files was the same as the one described for Dutch news media.

6.1.3.4 OpenSoNaR SoNaR is a Modern Dutch corpus that contains a wide range of subcorpora which can be sorted by country (Netherlands and Belgium). One subcorpus is the Newspapers corpus. It contains newspaper issues from Dutch and Belgian news media. For the Belgian part, the corpus contains DM, DS, HLN, and NB, but only issues from 2006. The corpus was thus set to issues from Belgian newspapers only, and the search query was [word="Ze|ze|Zij|zij"][word="is"][word="een"]. Although the corpus is tagged, the noun continuation (by adding [pos_head="n"]) was left out, so that SoNaR data do not differ from all other Dutch data.

6.1.3.5 JSI corpora in the SketchEngine The JSI¹⁴⁰ Timestamped corpora are provided by the SketchEngine and contain data from the RSS feeds of the relevant news media. All

¹³⁹<https://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/about-us/about-us.page> [Accessed 25-07-2023].

¹⁴⁰Josef Stefan Institute, Slovenia. Corpus information at <https://www.sketchengine.eu/jozef-stefan-institute-newsfeed-corpus/> [Accessed 25-07-2023].

data can thus be found online. Both for Dutch and for German, data from 2014 until 2021 is available online, but the 2021 data was not considered for the corpus study. For Belgian news media, the search engine was set to the websites of DM, DS, HLN, and NB. All data from between 2014 and 2020 was retrieved from the Dutch JSI corpus by using the search query [word="Ze|ze|Zij|zij"][word="is"][word="een"]. German data that was not freely available through one of the established German newspaper corpora (cf. below) was also downloaded from the German JSI corpus. This was data from ND and BZ between 2014 and 2020.

6.1.3.6 Newspaper corpora by DWDS The DWDS (*Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*) contains diachronic and synchronic corpora and offers newspaper corpora from 1945 onwards. Issues from DZ from 1946 until 2018 were searched here (2019-2020 was continued in the DeReKo), as well as issues from BZ until 1995, ND until 1990, and TS from 1996 to 2020. The DWDS corpora are tagged and the search query was \$w=@sie \$w=@ist * with \$p=@NN.

6.1.3.7 DeReKo DeReKo (*Deutsches Referenzkorpus*) is a large corpus of written texts and contains a wide range of regional news media data, as well as some supraregional data. All issues from SP were searched through the DeReKo, as well as issues from DZ from 2019 and 2020. Local newspapers, namely NN, PNN and DNN were searched through the corpus as well. These parts of the corpus, which are situated in the W-Archiv, are not tagged. The search query was "sie ist".

6.1.3.8 USAS Tagger Following the results for Dutch, feminised and non-feminised PNs were allocated to semantic fields in order to assess whether the semantics of a PN plays a role in the likelihood of it being feminised. While lexical information about words, i.e., denotational information, can usually be found in dictionaries, large data samples and the aim of finding semantic similarities (i.e., constituting semantic fields) between single items in the data calls for a different method. This is compounded by the fact that semantic classifications are not objective: extracting one or more semantic key points from the lexical

dictionary information about an item is a rather subjective matter. For example, from the definition of *woordvoerder* ‘spokesman, spokesperson’ in *Van Dale*, we can extract the information that this is someone who speaks, but the information, or the association, that this occurs mostly in a professional and/or political context is left out:

(60) **woordvoerder**

vrouw ook **woordvoerster**

1 iem. die het woord voert, die spreekt (in een vergadering enz.)

2 iem. die namens anderen spreekt¹⁴¹

Hence, a theoretical basis is needed for a semantic classification, so that at least the semantic features of an item are not chosen randomly, but based on some kind of template. Such a template is provided in the form of the USAS tagger. The Semantic Analysis System was developed at the Lancaster University Centre for Computer Research on Language and it “is a framework for undertaking the automatic semantic analysis of text.”¹⁴² It consists of 21 discourse fields, listed in Table 6.1, each with a number of specifying subfields. Based on these semantic fields and subfields, a tagger was developed for a number of languages. Currently, eight languages, among them Dutch, are available for tagging. The tagger attributes one or more semantic tags from the semantic template of 21 semantic discourse fields to a token. The English tagger is available as a free web tagger, while the Dutch version, which is much less developed than the English one, can be applied by running a Python script.

¹⁴¹“Spokesman/-person, woman also spokeswoman. 1: Someone who talks, speaks (in a meeting etc.); 2: someone who speaks on behalf of others.” [N.V.]

¹⁴²<https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/> [Accessed 24-11-2023].

N°	FIELD	N°	FIELD
1./A	General & abstract terms	12./N	Numbers & measurement
2./B	The body & the individual	13./O	Substances, materials, objects & equipment
3./C	Arts & Crafts	14./P	Education
4./E	Emotional actions, states & processes	15./Q	Linguistic actions, states & processes
5./F	Food & farming	16./S	Social actions, states & processes
6./G	Government & the public domain	17./T	Time
7./H	Architecture, houses, buildings & the home	18./W	The world & our environment
8./I	Money & commerce	19./X	Psychological actions, states & processes
9./K	Entertainment, sports & games	20./Y	Science & technology
10./L	Life & living things	21./Z	Names & grammatical words
11./M	Movement, location, travel & transport		

Table 6.1: Discourse fields in the USAS Tagset. Each field has its own letter in the tagset, provided after the category number in the table.

A set of Dutch PNs¹⁴³ was run through the Dutch tagger by script, and nouns that are directly translatable to English were also run through the English tagger, because this enabled a larger set of nouns to be automatically tagged. The PNs that were not recognised by the tagger were tagged by hand, by use of the tagset listed in Table 6.1. Hence, the automatic tagger and the tagset it is based on served merely as a help for a unified attribution of semantic features to a PN, restricted to 21 fixed discourse fields.

Although each tag consists of one letter, representing one semantic field, and at least one number (e.g., S9 or G1.2), only letters or larger semantic fields are considered for the analysis. As a result, every numbered tag was retraced to one larger category or field, in order to evade a chaotic analysis based on a set of tags scattered over a wide range of semantic subfields (e.g., each tag S9 was retraced to the class S, each tag G1.2 was retraced to the class G). An item can either receive one or multiple tags. This means that the number of tagged items does not coincide with the total number of awarded tags. The purpose is to gather

¹⁴³Section 6.2.2.2 deals with this set of nouns.

information about the semantics of the different items. On the item-level, it is not relevant for the analysis whether one item receives one or more tags from the same category (e.g., item A receives the tags X1, but also the tags X2 and X3). Since the semantic classification is based on the code/field itself (X) and not on its subcodes/subfields (X1, X2, X3...), an item is already categorised once it has received a code. In other words, an item A (which is a PN) is already categorised to a semantic field X once it receives a code X1 – the addition of the codes X2, X3, etc. do not further categorise them into category X. Subcodes merely stand for the semantic specifics of the item, but they are all part of one broader semantic class. The classification system is summarised in Figure 6.10. For each PN, the tagger attributed the tag ‘S2.2m/f’ to the noun, which stands for ‘People: Male/Female’, in combination with a semantic feature. For instance, the tag ‘G2.1 (Crime, law and order)’ may be combined with the tag ‘S2.2m/f’ in tagging the PN *advocaat* ‘lawyer.–F’, in order to clarify that the semantic feature is linked with human beings. Since the latter is part of every PN, it was not included in the analysis – it is implied in every PN.

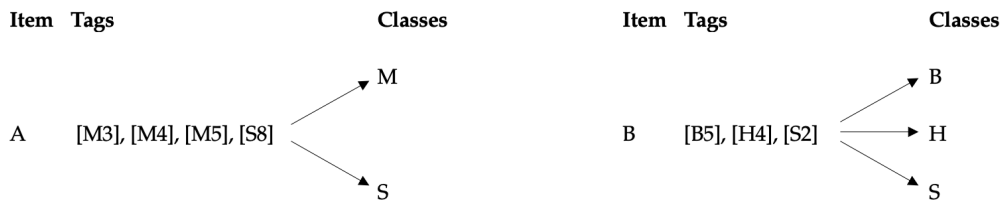


Figure 6.10: Example classification of semantically tagged items.

6.2 Dutch

6.2.1 Results

6.2.1.1 North The number of results from the Dutch corpus search are listed in Table 6.2 for a broad overview of the data. They are listed as the absolute numbers of PNs in a predicative construction [*zij/ze is NP*], both with and without feminising morphology. The 19th century was counted as one period of time; only NRC existed throughout most of the century. 19th-century results are thus nearly exclusively based on NRC. The first half of

Period	NRC	VK	TR	DT	AD	Sum
1828-1899	98			5		103
1900-1919	107			26		133
1920-1939	230	43		135		409
1940-1959	92	52	43	112	79	378
1960-1969	56	72	64	161	94	447
1970-1979	67	44	62	131	78	382
1980-1989	124	112	88	145	111	580
1990-1999	181	212	96	91	87	667
2000-2009	287	318	179	219	186	1.189
2010-2015	229	262	141	162	151	945
2016-2020	191	208	147	108	104	758
1828-2020	1.662	1.323	820	1.295	890	5.990

Table 6.2: PNs in predicative position in Dutch newspapers, 1828-2020.

the 20th century is divided into 20-year periods. After that, starting in 1960, each analysed period is restricted to one decade. This is due to the fact that the 1960s mark the period of incipient and significant change in the societal status of women and their accessibility to and participation in the public (work) space.¹⁴⁴ This societal change may have entailed a change in writing about women in news media as well.

To gauge the impact of neutralisation language policies in some Dutch newspapers, starting in 2016, the last decade is again split up into two time frames (2010-2015 and 2016-2020). All in all, there are 5.990 different predicative constructions with a PN in the investigated Dutch newspapers.

The relative proportion of feminised PNs to the total number of PNs by period is essential, as it permits the tracing of quantitative changes in the process of feminisation. These relative occurrences of feminised PNs are displayed in Fig. 6.11. The graph displays a steady downward tendency from the second half of the 20th century onwards. The average number of feminised PNs falls below 90% for the first time in the 1960s and this downward trend

¹⁴⁴Female participation on the labour market in the Netherlands, for instance, increased from 25,6% to 35,6% between 1960 and 1985 (Plantenga et al. 1990: 339-342); in Belgium, that number rose from 27,7% in 1970 to 33,1% in 1985 (Cantillon et al. 1994: 1). Cf. also Fig. 4.1 in Section 4.3.1.

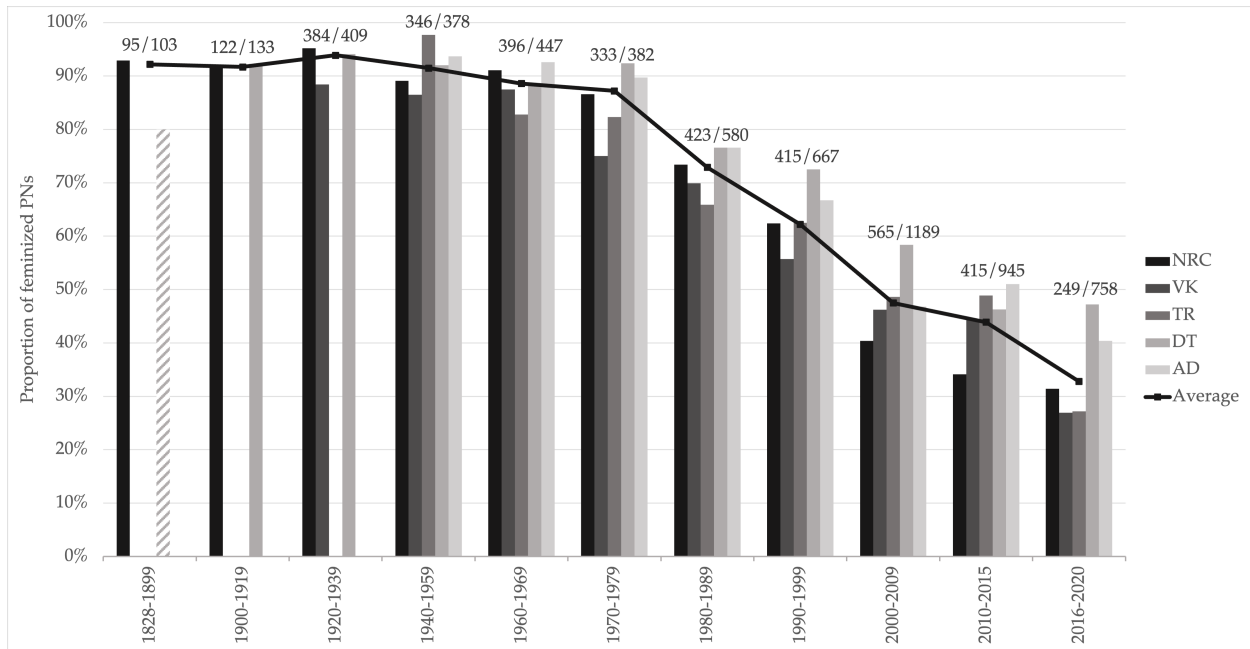


Figure 6.11: Relative proportion of feminised PNs to all PNs in Dutch news media (1828-2020). The striped column indicates a sample with a low absolute value (5, cf. Table 6.2).

receives another boost – as expected – in the 1980s. The difference between data from all newspapers in the period 1828-1959 (947 feminised PNs vs. 76 non-feminised PNs) and those in 1960-1969 (396 feminised PNs vs. 51 non-feminised PNs) is already slightly statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5.7496$, $p < .05^*$).¹⁴⁵ The 1970s are stable again, but the neutralisation boost in the 1980s is highly significant again, both in comparison to the starting situation until 1959 ($\chi^2 = 113.84$, $p < .001^{***}$) and to the 1970s ($\chi^2 = 26.919$, $p < .001^{***}$). Falling numbers between 2016 and 2020 thus look like a continuation of an ongoing trend that had been in effect for multiple decades. After 2000, feminisation stabilises somewhat, so that the difference between the first decade of the 21st century and the second one is initially not significant ($\chi^2 = 2.61$, $p = 0.11$). However, the decrease in the use of feminising morphology is again highly significant after 2016, compared to the five years before this time span ($\chi^2 = 21.189$, $p < .001^{***}$). Hence, at moments when a neutralisation policy becomes relevant – at first in the 1980s and again in 2016 – feminisation significantly subsides, each time following a more or less stable state.

¹⁴⁵The change in the 1960s compared to the previous decade is not significant: $\chi^2 = 1.6469$, $p = 0.199$.

It is noticeable that results from DT and AD nearly continuously differ from NRC, VK and TR in that they are somewhat more prone to feminisation. It seems that a lack of consistent or rigorous neutralisation policies in these newspapers have a significant effect: in the period 2016-2020 the latter feminise on average in 28.6% of instances, whereas the former feminise on average in 43.9% of instances. The difference is significant ($\chi^2 = 15.512$, $p < .001^{***}$).

The results displayed in the graph will be discussed in the following sections against the theoretical background previously laid out. Based on these numbers, as well as existing language policies, further analysis will follow four periods:

I. 1828-1859

The period before any (significant) changes in the relative number of feminised PNs – that can be traced back to societal changes as well – become visible. This period is the starting point, from which deviations should be analysed.

II. 1960-1979

The period in which the first (significant) changes in the relative number of feminised PNs became visible, presumably related to changes in the soci(et)al status of women, but before any neutralising language policy was in effect.

III. 1980-2015

The period that marks the first strongly significant effects of language policies as the result of new political measures taking effect, as a consequence of further socio-political developments.

IV. 2016-2020

The period that marks the use of neutralising language policies in the wake of gender-fair language in Dutch news media.

6.2.1.2 South Absolute values of occurrences of PNs found in the predicative construction in Flemish newspapers are listed, by period, in Table 6.3. A total amount of 902 PNs

was found in the Flemish corpus. The number is certainly lower for Flemish data, because no corpus is available for Flemish news media from 1950 until 1995.

	DM	DS	HLN	NB	KN	SUM
1880-1899	1		12			13
1900-1919	16		44			59
1920-1939	47	51	85	29		212
1940-1950	19	17	17	16		69
1960-1995						
2006-2009	29	30	69	57	8	193
2010-2015	2	2	21	17	34	76
2016-2020	47	27	81	73	49	277
SUM	161	127	328	192	91	899

Table 6.3: PNs in predicative position in Flemish newspapers, 1880-2020.

The distribution of feminised items within the data by period is displayed in Fig. 6.12. The data show that feminisation in Flemish newspapers is certainly a more active process in general, in terms of realised productivity. Given the status of grammatical gender and its more conservative tendencies in Flemish, as well as a lack of clear guidelines concerning the use of feminising morphology, a more productive feminisation process is in line with expectations. The period 2000-2009 only covers 2006 issues of Belgian newspapers available in the SoNaR corpus, as well as 2007-2009 KN data, which is available in NexisUni starting in 2007. The columns corresponding to data from DM between 1880-1899 and 2010-2015, as well as DS between 2010-2015 and KN between 2000-2009, are blurred, because the number of constructions is not high enough to make any relevant statements about it (cf. Table 6.3).

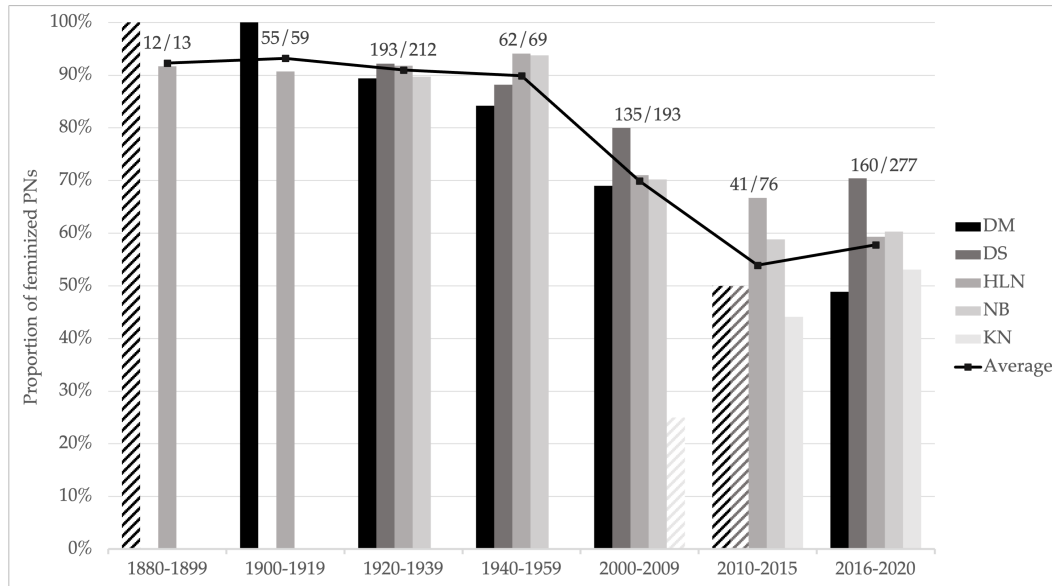


Figure 6.12: Relative proportion of feminised PNs to all PNs in Flemish news media, 1880-2020. Striped columns indicate low-value samples (cf. Table 6.3).

While feminisation in Dutch newspapers becomes a minority feature after 2000, it occurs on distinctly more than half of PNs in Flemish data. Generally, there has also been a tendency of decreasing feminisation in Flemish newspapers as well, and the difference between the starting situation in the period 1828-1950 (322 feminised PNs vs. 31 non-feminised PNs) and the first decade of the 21st century (135 feminised PNs vs. 58 non-feminised PNs) is significant ($\chi^2 = 39.832$, $p < .001^{***}$). Data from the decade after that (in this case, 2010-2015) also significantly differs from early 21st-century data ($\chi^2 = 5.4847$, $p < .05^*$). A seemingly increasing use of feminisation morphology after 2015 may be due to the lower number of constructions between 2010 and 2015 (only 76 PNs in total), which could cause a somewhat distorted impression of the data.¹⁴⁶

Although a decrease in the use of feminising morphology is clearly visible in Flemish data as well, the proportion of feminised PNs to all PNs has remained significantly higher¹⁴⁷ than that in Dutch news media in the last two decades, as shown in Fig. 6.13. The difference

¹⁴⁶In any case, the difference between 2010-2015 and 2016-2021 is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.2154$, $p = 0.64$). Further research on the developments within Dutch and Flemish newspapers in the last years could possibly offer a clearer insight.

¹⁴⁷Dutch vs. Flemish in 2000-2009: $\chi^2 = 32.528$, $p < .001^{***}$; Dutch vs. Flemish in 2010-2020: $\chi^2 = 37.925$, $p < .001^{***}$.

between Dutch and Flemish news media in 2010-2015 is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.9393$, $p = 0.33$), although it is possible that the rather small Flemish data sample for this period accounts for this observation. Based on data by Huybrecht (1998), mentioned in Section 4.3.2, the quantitative difference between Dutch and Flemish feminised forms was already significant in the 1990s.¹⁴⁸ In Huybrecht's data, 329 of 408 forms referring to women were feminised, i.e., 80.6%. Since Huybrecht also included the news media investigated here in her data, the graph shows her data for the period 1990-1999.

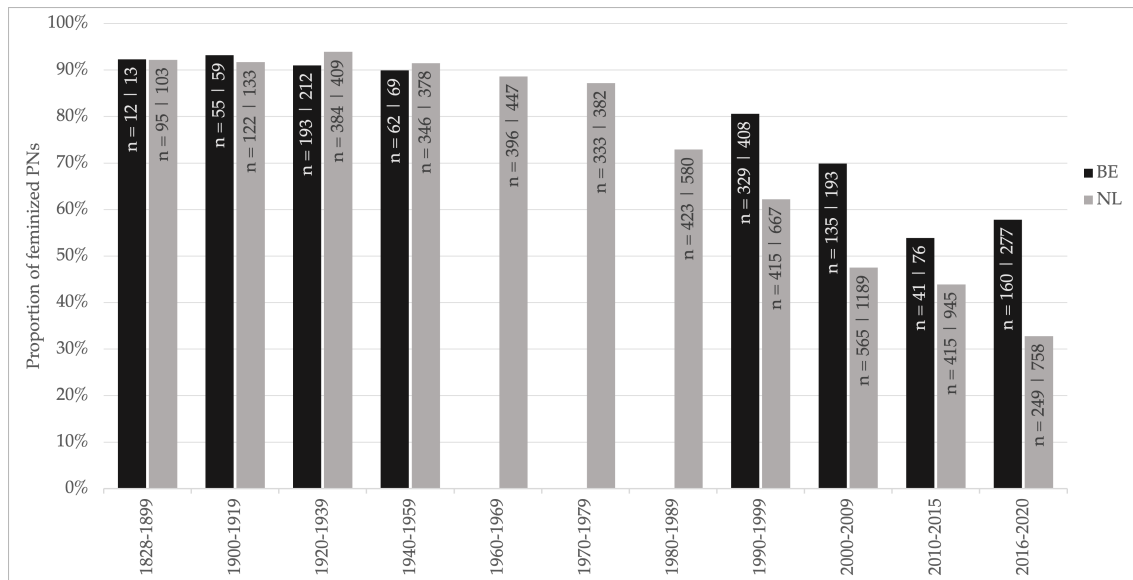


Figure 6.13: Quantitative comparison of feminisation in Dutch and Flemish news media. Relative proportion (in %) of feminised PNs (F) to all PNs (x), displayed per column in absolute values as well ($n = F | x$).

For the sake of comparability, the same classification of time frames in different phases will be used for Belgian data, although Phase II (1960-1979) and a large part of Phase III (1980-2015) are completely missing from the Belgian data. The following chapters are dedicated to a detailed discussion of the data shown above. Multiple factors will be shown to contribute to this variation in Dutch, including varying degrees of deflection in the gender system, referent accessibility as a property of referentiality (within an already non-referential context), and the semantics of the PN itself.

¹⁴⁸ $\chi^2 = 39.44$, $p < .001$ ***.

6.2.2 Discussion

6.2.2.1 The role of grammatical gender The Dutch grammatical gender system has been subject to a wide-ranging process of deflection. Though it is assumed that a three-way gender system was last preserved in its entirety in Middle Dutch (cf. Section 3.1.1), prescriptive writing significantly contributed to the preservation of gender inflection in formal written Dutch texts (cf. Section 4.3.2), which affected 19th and early 20th-century Dutch newspapers. In data from these periods we still encounter the overtly feminine article *ene*:¹⁴⁹

- (61) Zij is **ene** afschuwelijke **Bonapartiste**.
 she is a.FEM horrible bonapartist.FEM
 ‘She is a horrible bonapartist.’

(*Algemeen Handelsblad*, 27 January, 1884)

As expected, the feminine inflection of the definite article is preserved longer in Flemish news media than in Dutch newspapers. In Flanders it is even still the preferred form in the first decades of the 20th century (cf. Table 6.4).

	NL				BE			
	INFL		NON-INFL		INFL		NON-INFL	
	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%
1828-1899	59	57.3	44	42.7	9	69.2	4	30.8
1900-1919	5	3.8	98	96.2	35	58.3	25	41.7
1920-1939	0	0	409	100.00	5	2.3	208	97.7

Table 6.4: Inflected (*ene*.FEM) vs. non-inflected (*een-ø*.UTR) indefinite articles in Dutch and Flemish news media between 1828-1939, absolute (ABS) and relative, percentual values. Dominant pattern highlighted.

19th-century Dutch newspapers demonstrate variation between the inflected and the uninflected article. Sometimes there is alternation between inflected and deflected forms within one sentence (62), which apparently is not necessarily connected with the type of NP, since one and the same NP can either carry an inflected or an uninflected article (63).

¹⁴⁹Note that gender is only marked adnominally in Germanic.

- (62) Zij is **eene zangeres** met geest en gevoel; zij is **een** warme
 she is a.FEM singer.FEM with spirit and feeling; she is a.UTR warm
medestander van Orelio.
 supporter.FEM of Orelio
 ‘She is a singer with spirit and feeling; she is a warm supporter of Orelio.’

(*Algemeen Handelsblad*, 11 July, 1893)

- (63) Zij is **eene** **virtuose**; zelfs **een** zeer groote **virtuose** ...
 she is a.FEM virtuoso.FEM even a.UTR very great virtuoso.FEM ...
 ‘She is a virtuoso, a very great virtuoso even.’

(*Algemeen Handelsblad*, 19 April, 1901)

This variation in Dutch newspapers points to a conflict between prescriptive preservation of a no longer existing grammatical gender differentiation on the one hand, and free language use on the other. Until late in the 19th century, word lists containing gender information were published as a “memory aid” for speakers of Dutch who, by then, did not distinguish the masculine from the feminine gender. A last occurrence of *eene* in Dutch newspapers is found in 1904.

The observation that the relative number of feminised PNs remains high in 19th-century Dutch and early 20th-century Flemish data is consistent with the (partly artificially upheld) masculine/feminine gender distinction.¹⁵⁰ A feminine inflected article cannot precede a non-feminised PN (**zij is eene zanger* ‘she is a.FEM singer.−F’). Deflection characterises Northern Dutch more prominently than the more conservative Flemish grammatical gender system. Occurrences of the inflected feminine article are comparatively more frequent in Flemish newspapers (64). While the turn of the century marks the end of adnominal gender inflection in Dutch newspaper sources, in Flemish sources 58.3% of articles in the construction are still inflected between 1900 and 1919. Inflection on the article occurs as late as 1935/36 (65-66),

¹⁵⁰The inflected article preferably occurs in the vicinity of a PN rather than any other continuation of copular *zijn*. Hence, the choice for feminine inflection seems to be influenced by animacy. Until 1899, the investigated Northern Dutch sources contain 1269 constructions of the form [*zij/ze is* ART_{INDEF}], regardless of whether the continuation is a PN or not. 439 of those (34.6%) carry an inflected article (*zij/ze is eene*). In constructions with PN continuations 57.3% of the articles are inflected (cf. Table 6.4). Hence, inflected articles occur disproportionately more often as the adnominal elements to a PN than any other continuation of *zij/ze is* ($\chi^2 = 20.237$, $p < .001^{***}$).

but by then they have become marginal, with only 2.3% of articles being inflected in the time frame 1920-1939.

- (64) Zij is **eene** bezadigde **realiste**, die binnen zekere grenzen blijft ...
she is a.FEM sedate realist.FEM who within certain boundaries stays ...
'She is a sedate realist who stays within certain boundaries.'

(*De Vooruit* (DM), 29 April, 1912)

- (65) Zij is **eene** behendige **kantwerkster**; doch 't is te Salvignac niet dat zij
she is an.FEM agile lacemaker.FEM however it is at Salvignac not that she
met hare kunst veel verdienen kan ...
with her.FEM art much earn can ...
'She is an agile lacemaker, though it is not at Salvignac where she can earn much
with her art.'

(*Het Nieuwsblad*, 4 December, 1935)

- (66) Zij heeft geen anderen naam dan dien van Georgette; zij is **eene vondelinge**.
she has no other name than that of Georgette she is a.FEM foundling.FEM
'She has no other name than 'Georgette'; she is a.fem foundling.'

(*Het Nieuwsblad*, 30 January, 1936)

For Flanders, a non-deflected M/F distinction was (and is) still a reality. During the first half of the 20th century, Flanders started orienting more toward the Northern Dutch Standard (Janssens & Marynissen 2005: 151-159). Until the 19th century, there had not been a Flemish Standard, and in the second half of that century, the course of action – linguistic orientation toward the North (known as integrationism) or linguistic independency (known as particularism) – was still under discussion (ibid.: 151). The integrationist stance in the first decades of the 20th century included grammar and the lexicon in the first place (ibid.: 158-159). This may help explain the avoidance of inflected articles in the Flemish Standard, which is based on the Northern Dutch model, and possibly even the further development toward less feminisation in later decades, with Northern standard language use as its precedent. Yet, feminisation is still significantly better represented in Flemish news media.

While the data in Table 6.4 shows that inflected articles occurred until ca. 1900 (Netherlands) and ca. 1930 (Flanders), it was shown in Fig. 6.13 that the proportion of feminised items to all PNs did not change until the 1960s. This observation can be explained by the semantics of feminised PNs, and it does not refute the idea that gender played a crucial role in the preservation of the feminisation system in Dutch. As the analysis in the following paragraph demonstrates, there is a continuation in the semantics of feminised PNs throughout the course of nearly 200 years: PNs which were feminised before 1900 are mostly still feminised by 2020, because they stem from certain semantics fields. The prescriptive preservation of the Dutch gender system until ca. 1900 contributed to the preservation of the feminisation system. That feminisation does not decrease until ca. 1960 is linked with the fact that the set of feminised PNs does not change until that time. Only after 1960 do “new” PNs (which had previously only had male referents and had therefore not yet been feminised) enter the data, and these are mostly not feminised in the data. In sum, thus, the artificially upheld Dutch masculine/feminine gender distinction helps explain why PNs with female referents are almost always (in over 90% of cases) feminised in early data. The loss of this gender distinction explains why “new” PNs, which only enter the data a few decades later around 1960, are no longer feminised.

6.2.2.2 Semantics The prototypical feminised PN is a geographical name (67) or an occupation in the entertainment and sports sectors (68).

- (67) a. Zij is een **Poolse** die dertien jaar geleden naar Nederland kwam.
 she is a Polish.woman who thirteen years ago to Netherlands came
 ‘She is a Polish woman who came to the Netherlands thirteen years ago.’

(*De Volkskrant*, 3 October, 2019)

- b. Zij is een geadopteerde **Keniaanse** uit Appingedam.
 She is a adopted Kenyan.F from Appingedam
 ‘She is an adopted Kenyan from Appingedam.’

(*Trouw*, 8 August, 2020)

- (68) a. Zij is een heel succesvol **schaatsster** en dat was ze ook het afgelopen seizoen.
 she is a very successful ice.skater.F and that was she also the past season

‘She is a very successful ice skater, which she also was in the past season.’

(*Algemeen Dagblad*, 30 March, 2018)

- b. Ze is een lenige **ex-turnster** die nog zo in een split kan vallen,
 She is a flexible ex-gymnast.F who still so in a split can fall
 acrobatisch op haar handen loopt en viool en piano speelt op podia van
 acrobatically on her hands walks and violin and piano plays on stages of
 Parade tot Carré.
 Parade to Carré

‘She is a flexible ex-gymnast who can do a split just like that, walks acrobatically on her hands, and plays the violin and the piano on all stages from Parade to Carré.’

(*NRC*, 1 August, 2020)

To assess whether PNs that are normally feminised have any semantic peculiarities, the remaining set of feminised PNs after 2016 (i.e., after significant impact of neutralisation) was semantically analysed with the help of the semantic discourse-field template used by the USAS tagger. In Dutch newspapers after 2016, 271 types are non-feminised and 108 are feminised, with an overlap of 34 PN types which occur as both feminised and non-feminised units. These were left out of the analysis, because this means they allow for variation and are not exclusively (non-)feminised. Accordingly, the dataset of PNs that *only* occur as feminised items is the dataset that is of most interest here. These nouns should in theory semantically differ from nouns which fluctuate between feminisation and neutralisation. The 34 items with varying feminisation proneness are consequently left out for now, leaving 74 exclusively feminised items and 237 exclusively non-feminised items for analysis here. Of 237 non-feminised PNs, the Dutch tagger was able to tag 92 items (38.8%). Another 91 items (38.4%) were run through the English tagger, because they have direct English translations. 183 items (77.2%) were thus tagged automatically, and the rest was tagged manually by means of the list of discourse fields in Table 6.1. Of the 74 feminised items, 40 (54.1%) were

tagged automatically: 20 by the Dutch tagger and 20 by the English tagger. The remaining 34 needed to be manually tagged; more than half (18) of these are geographical.

Table 6.5 lists the number of PNs per class. As explained before, the analysis is item-class-based, not tag-based (cf. Fig. 6.10), and thus, multiple attributes from one class were counted as one: once a PN is within a semantic class, it cannot be *more* in this class.

CODE	f _F	p_%	f _{-F}	p_%	CODE	f _F	p_%	f _{-F}	p_%
Z	21	28.4	5	2.1	H	3	2.7	3	1.3
K	17	23.0	28	11.8	Q	3	2.7	22	9.3
S	15	20.3	57	24.1	X	3	2.7	34	14.3
G	10	13.5	49	20.7	L	2	1.8	6	2.5
M	4	5.4	14	5.9	Y	2	1.8	8	3.4
A	4	5.4	52	21.9	F	1	1.4	6	2.5
I	4	5.4	9	3.8	P	1	1.4	4	1.7
O	4	5.4	3	1.3	T	1	1.4	15	6.3
B	3	2.7	10	4.2	C	0	0.0	13	5.5
E	3	2.7	13	5.5	N	0	0.0	4	1.7

Table 6.5: Frequencies (f) of feminised (n = 101) and non-feminised (n = 355) items that received at least one tag from one of the listed semantic classes. Percentual proportions (p) represent the relative number of items in both samples (F and -F) which were attributed the corresponding tag ($p = f/n$). As an example, 17 *different* feminised PNs received at least one K-tag (cf. 6.5).

Because the dataset of most interest is the one containing feminised items, the analysis will be based on that sample. The largest categories containing exclusively feminised items are Z (which are all geographical names), K (Entertainment, Sports & Games), S (Social Actions, States & Processes), and G (Government & the Public Domain). Tags for non-feminised items, by contrast, are somewhat more scattered over different semantic fields, with the largest categories being S, A (General & abstract terms), and G. It is no coincidence that the discourse field of general and abstract terms is so highly represented in the set of exclusively non-feminised nouns, because this field is the least likely to be explicitly linked with social gender. All values in the above table were plotted in an IQR-test¹⁵¹ to determine the outlying

¹⁵¹Interquartile range test. The IQR is the range of the middle 50% of the sample (quantiles 2 and 3). What remains are thus two quartiles below and above the middle range. Outliers are data points that are either more than 1.5 IQR below Q1 (the first quartile), or more than 1.5 IQR above Q4 (the fourth quartile).

values, which for feminised items thus seem to be Z, K, S, and G, per informal assessment. The boxplots in Fig. 6.14 demonstrate the result of this test, showing that indeed, for exclusively feminised PNs, the four named categories are outliers within the sample. This means that these categories behave prominently in that they are significantly larger than expected, compared to the majority of the data. In the sample of exclusively non-feminised PNs, only the S category is an outlier.

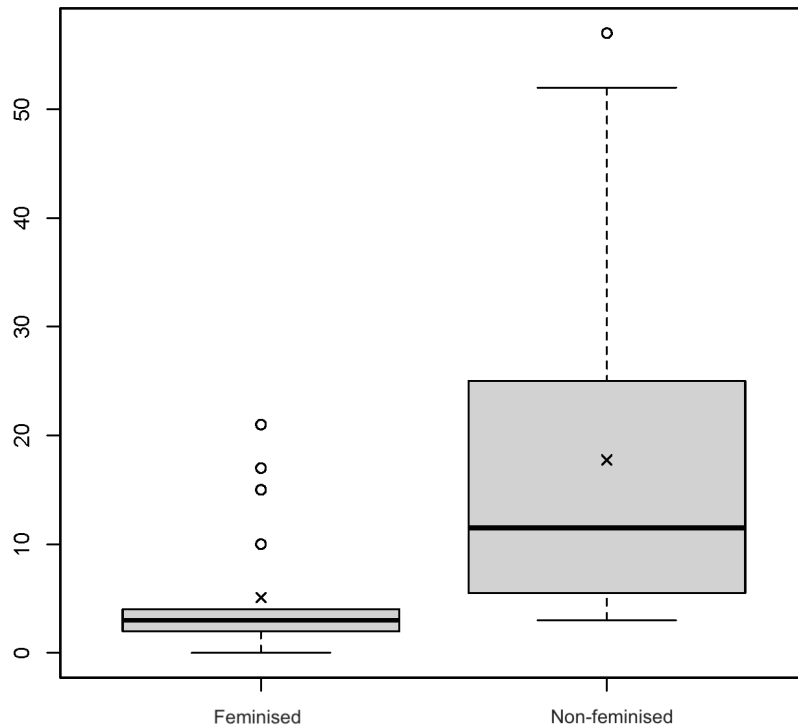


Figure 6.14: Boxplots of the frequencies of semantic classes to which Dutch feminised and non-feminised nouns pertain in Period IV. The bold line within the boxes represents the median value in the sample, the boxes below and above represent the first and third quartile (Q1 and Q3, respectively). The striped lines and their limit lines (the whiskers) stand for 1.5 times the interquartile range (1.5 IQR). The mean is represented by x, and the individual data points are the outlying data points. Outliers are thus found in the feminised sample at the 10, 15, 17, and 21 frequencies, and in the non-feminised sample at the 57 frequency.

The four defining semantic fields for feminised items will be considered separately, while the other categories together will be considered the semantic “rest”. Two of the outlying categories in the set of feminised items are not only a particularity of feminised items, but their frequencies also significantly differ from those in the set of non-feminised items (cf. Table 6.6). In other words, the categories Z and K are unique to feminised items; they are attributed significantly less often to PNs in the set of non-feminised items and are therefore no particular feature of the latter. Due to the scattered spread of categories over non-feminised types, the frequency difference between feminised and non-feminised items in the “rest” category is also significant:

CODE	f _F	f _{¬F}	χ^2	p
Z	21	5	51.401	< .001***
K	17	28	6.102	< .01**
S	15	57	0.086	0.7695
G	10	49	1.063	0.3026
Rest	38	216	17.183	< .001***
	101	355		

Table 6.6: Outlying semantic categories in the sample of feminised items compared to these categories in the sample of non-feminised items. Z and K are significantly more often attributed to feminised items (cf. the significance level of chi-squared and its respective p-value).

Hence, classes typical of feminised PNs are geographical names and PNs in the arts and sports field. Indeed, geographical names as non-feminised forms are rare: *Boeroe* ‘buru, Dutch Surinamese’ is non-feminised (whereby the reason is certainly its vowel ending), as well as *Pathaan* ‘Pathan, Pashtun.¬F’, *Pers* ‘Persian.¬F’, and *Zuid-Afrikaan* ‘South-African.¬F’, which are all feminisable. The abbreviation *bn’er* (*Bekende Nederlander* ‘famous Dutch person’) also received the tag Z for geographical names, although it differs from the other nouns. The feminised counterpart to *Nederlander* is *Nederlandse*, and the abbreviation *bn’er* cannot be feminised by the regular deadjectival suffix *-se*. All other geographical names are consistently feminised.

Feminisation of geographical names is not only a feature of Dutch; it appears to be a favoured semantic area in Swedish, which is structurally similar to Dutch with regards to gender, as well (Nübling 2000: 217). As a morphological process that marks sex on nouns, feminisation marks an identity feature of its referents. Sex is the only identity characteristic that is marked linguistically in Dutch, as opposed to other characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socioeconomic or sociocultural status, age, and appearance. The fact that nationality is an identity feature as well may link it with feminisation: if the PN denotes a feature that is part of a person's identity, other features that identify the referent become more salient as well. As opposed to profession nouns (e.g., *advocaat* 'lawyer.¬F') or some more general PNs (e.g., *lezer* 'reader.¬F'), identity PNs directly refer to an intrinsic quality of a person, instead of to an action, process, state, or activity carried out by that person, regardless of the sex of that person. Identity PNs thereby grant a more direct access to the referent. In fact, within in the 21 geographical names there are two types which are more ethnicity- than nationality-oriented, namely *latina* 'latina' and *Oeigoerse* 'Uyghur.F'. Five other feminised types are not included in the Z-set of geographical names but do carry identity features: *weduwe* 'widow' as a social status (S4), *moslima* 'muslim.F' as a religious affiliation (S9), *brunette* 'brunette' as an appearance feature (O4), and the two religious-political nouns *hijabista* 'hijabist.F' and *islamiste* 'islamist.F' (G1 and S9). With 26 identity PNs, they make up 35.1% of all exclusively feminised types.

In the sample of exclusively non-feminised items, such PNs are scarce. Crucially, while geographical names are typical of feminised PNs, non-feminised identity PNs commonly refer to different identity features. The nouns mentioned above (*Boeroe*, *Pathaan*, *Pers*) are more prominently names of ethnic origin. In this category we also find *jezidi* 'Yazidi.¬F' and *indiaan* 'Indian.¬F'. Religious affiliations are represented here as well: *calvinist* 'calvinist.¬F', *christen* 'christian.¬F', *katholiek* 'catholic.¬F'. General nouns denoting origin, connected with social status, are also non-feminised: *vluchteling* 'refugee.¬F', *migrant* 'migrant.¬F', *vondeling* 'findling.¬F'. The feature of age is found in the non-feminised group: *tiener* 'teenager.¬F', *twintiger* 'twenty-something.¬F', *dertiger* 'thirty-something.¬F', *vi-*

jftiger ‘fifty-something.¬F’, *adolescent* ‘adolescent.¬F’, and *senior* ‘senior.¬F’. Lastly, political and ideological affiliations and opinions are also non-feminised: *democraat* ‘democrat.¬F’, *communist* ‘communist.¬F’, *liberaal* ‘liberal.¬F’, *republikein* ‘republican.¬F’, *trotskist* ‘trotskyist.¬F’, and the more general opinion-oriented *antisemiet* ‘antisemite.¬F’, *brexiteer* ‘brexiteer.¬F’, *interventionist* ‘interventionist.¬F’, *kapitalist* ‘capitalist.¬F’, *remainer* ‘remainer.¬F’, *separatist* ‘separatist.¬F’.

Overall then, the cut-off point of identity features which lead to feminisation is not quite clear. However, political and religious affiliations appear to be inclined toward neutralisation, unless blocked by social gender (*hijabista* ‘hijabist.F’, for instance, concerns an opinion about women, and *feministe* ‘feminist.F’ occurs both feminised and non-feminised). The same principle applies to age. A person’s origin is also likely to be neutralised, while the current social-relational status (*weduwe* ‘widow’, for instance) and a person’s appearance (*brunette*, *blondine*) are linked with feminisation. All in all, the difference between feminised and non-feminised items in terms of identity PNs remains significant.¹⁵² Perhaps the feminisation of identity PNs is more conclusive with regard to what is considered a relevant identity feature than the other way around (i.e., the idea that there is a pre-defined set of identity features, which should be expected to be feminised). After all, feminisation itself is integrated into the morphological system, pointing to sex as a very salient identity feature, more so than, for instance, religious affiliation.

With regard to the nouns pertaining to class K (Entertainment), there is no clear difference between feminised and non-feminised nouns on the level of subclasses:

¹⁵²In the feminised group, 26 of 74 items are an identity PN and in the non-feminised group 31 of 237 items: $\chi^2 = 18.325$, $p < .001^{***}$.

CODE	SUBCLASS	n _F	p_%	n _{¬F}	p_%
K1	Entertainment generally	3	14.3	6	15.8
K2	Music	4	19.0	9	23.7
K4	Drama	5	23.8	6	15.8
K5	Sports	9	42.9	17	44.7
SUM		21	100	38	100

Table 6.7: Subclasses of K and their distribution over feminised (n_F) and non-feminised (n_{¬F}) PNs, including percentage values.

The difference between feminised and non-feminised items lies, as seen above, in the total number of types classified in K, which differs significantly between the two groups (cf. Table 6.6). In absolute numbers, there are more non-feminised than feminised K-class nouns. Hence, it is not a strict rule that nouns within this class are feminised. Rather, by implication, this means that if a noun is feminised, it is likely that the noun is a geographical name, or a noun from the class K, especially in the sports domain: *basketbalster* ‘basketball player.F’, *klimster* ‘climber.F’, *schaatsster* ‘ice skater.F’, *turnster* ‘gymnast.F’, *voetbalster* ‘football player.F’, *zwemster* ‘swimmer.F’, *ballerina* ‘ballerina’, and the more general *speelster* ‘player.F’ and *sportvrouw* ‘sportswoman’. Within the non-feminised sports group, there are some anglicisms, which are feminisation-averse in Dutch: *gamer* ‘gamer.¬F’, *racer* ‘racer.¬F’, *sprinter* ‘sprinter.¬F’ and the sports-related PN *coach* ‘coach.¬F’. In fact, most of these PNs are merely sports-related: *jager* ‘hunter.¬F’ and *vechter* ‘fighter.¬F’ are not exclusive to sports and can be found elsewhere as well; *olympiër* ‘olympic.¬F’ is hardly feminisable and not a sport in itself, just as the feminisable nouns *scheidsrechter* ‘referee.¬F’, *winnaar* ‘winner.¬F’, *ruiter* ‘equestrian.¬F’, and *dribbelaar* ‘dribbler.¬F’; *ajacied* ‘Ajax supporter, fan.¬F’ is merely a fan of a specific sports club. What remains are a handful of sports nouns: *loper* ‘runner.¬F’, *paardrijder* ‘equestrian.¬F’, *tennisser* ‘tennis player.¬F’, *zeiler* ‘sailor.¬F’. In sum, these nouns seem to prefer feminisation, whereas more general or related terms are more easily neutralised.

As to the S group of social actions, states, and processes, neutralised PNs are most likely found in the S7 (20) and S5 (19) subclasses, which stand for power relationships

and group affiliation, respectively. In the S7 subclass, the nouns denote a person with power or authority. Examples here are *autocraat* ‘autocrat.¬F’, *baas* ‘boss.¬F’, *dictator* ‘dictator.¬F’, *voogd* ‘guardian.¬F’, *voorzitter* ‘president, chairman.¬F’. In the S5 subclass, general nouns denoting an in- or out-group status are found: *buitenstaander* and *outsider* ‘outsider.¬F’, *nieuwkomer* ‘newcomer.¬F’, *collega* ‘colleague.¬F’, *vertrouweling* ‘trustee.¬F’, as well as ethnic affiliations such as the abovementioned *jezidi* and *indiaan*. In the sample of feminised PNs, power-holding nouns are *koningin* ‘queen’ and *prinses* ‘princess’. Generally, royal titles are considered political PNs with an extra aspect of authority.

Lastly, it can be seen from historical data – the data from the starting point until 1960 – that the field of social actions, states, and processes has always been an outlier in non-feminised PNs. Before 1960, more than 90% of PNs were still feminised (cf. Fig. 6.11), and therefore logically most PNs in any semantic class, too. As the boxplots in Fig. 6.15 demonstrate, the spread of feminised and non-feminised items over different classes is reversed in comparison with data of the Period IV. Types are more concentrated in the non-feminised group and spread more evenly over different classes in the feminised group.

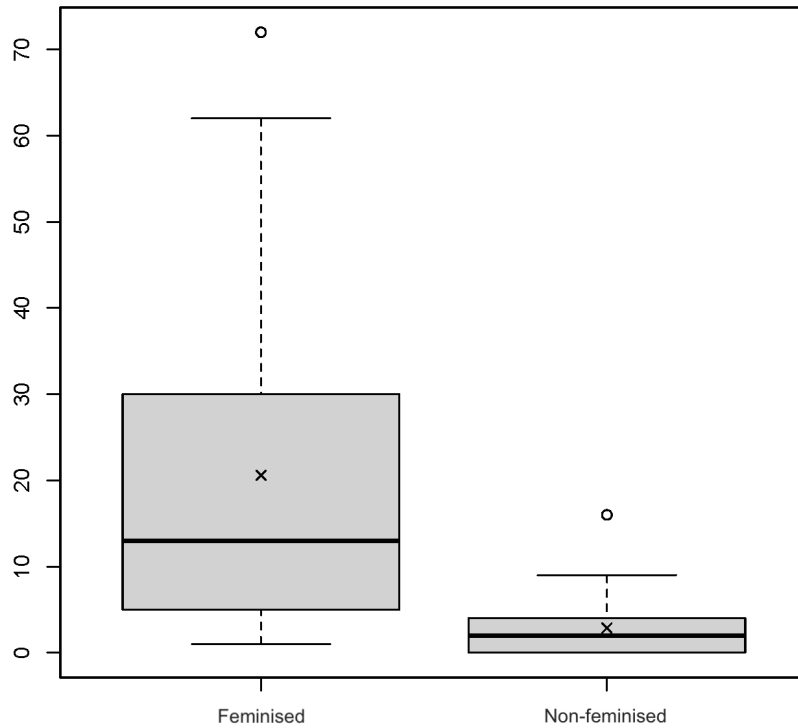


Figure 6.15: Boxplots of the frequencies of semantic classes to which Dutch feminised and non-feminised nouns pertain. Outliers, marked by the outlying data points, are found in the feminised sample at the 72 frequency, and in the non-feminised sample at the 16 frequency only.

The classes of geographical names (Z), arts and sports (K), social actions/states/processes (S), and the government and politics (G) are already the largest ones within the sample of exclusively feminised items ($n = 268$) in Period I, as seen in Table 6.8. Likewise, the proportion of feminised types allocated to the classes of arts and sports and geographical names differs significantly (as in Period IV) from the proportion of non-feminised types in these classes.

CODE	f _{FEM}	f _{¬FEM}	χ^2	p
S	72	16	0.0496	< .05*
K	62	0	8.4342	< .01**
Z	55	0	7.2276	< .01**
G	39	8	1.2315	0.2671
Rest	204	35	0.8938	0.3444
	432	59		

Table 6.8: Outlying semantic categories in the sample of feminised items compared to these categories in the sample of non-feminised items. Z and K are significantly more often attributed to feminised items (cf. the significance level of chi-squared and its respective p-value).

Nouns which are difficult to feminise and all loan words are neutralised: *detective* ‘detective.¬F’, *rechercheur* ‘detective, investigator.¬F’, *monarch* ‘monarch.¬F’, and *patriot* ‘patriot.¬F’. feminisable, but not easily feminised, are *scherpschutter* ‘sharpshooter.¬F’ and *vechtersbaas* ‘fighter.¬F’, an exocentric compound in which feminisation of the head *baas* ‘boss’ would change the meaning of the PN. Only *advocaat* ‘spokesperson, lawyer.¬F’ remains as an idiosyncratically neutralised item in this class.

In sum, the semantic discourse fields in which PNs are feminised have remained stable over time. However, caution is required in interpreting this observation. In Period I (before 1960), the largest semantic classes for feminised PNs were the ones discussed above. For this period, the observation can not adequately be explained by the relevance of female sex being explicitly marked on these items, because the vast majority of PNs in any semantic class was feminised. Rather, it can be deduced from the data in Period I that the main contexts in which female referents occurred were the arts and sports sectors, social constellations and actions, and political (mainly activist) environments, along with descriptive geographical names. Once a more varied set of different PNs entered the data, in the following periods (in relation with societal changes and their accompanying change toward writing about the more versatile roles of women in society), feminised PNs remained those which had been feminised all along. Nouns that had before nearly exclusively had male referents became used in

reference to women as well, but remained non-feminised. The realised productivity of feminisation patterns in Dutch stagnates, and this section dealt with one factor that contributes to this development, namely, the semantics of feminisable nouns and their relation to the relevance of sex marking. The proportion of the onomasiological market that is saturated remains largely the same, and it becomes unlikely that feminisation is applied to new forms (cf. Bybee’s (2001: 12f.) definition of productivity as the likelihood of a pattern’s application onto new forms). In short, productivity wanes. With regard to the semantics of feminised PNs, it can be said that the one remaining domain in which PNs are only occasionally feminised is the domain of geographical names, and sports names still prefer feminisation over neutralisation. As a rule, the more general a term is, the more likely neutralisation becomes.

The following paragraphs deal with a Flemish peculiarity, which contributes to the overall productivity of feminisation in the region.

6.2.2.3 Diatopic variation in the productivity of morphological patterns If a noun is feminisable by the suffix *-e*, then in Flemish newspapers it is likely feminised (69a) and in Dutch newspapers it most likely is not (69b).

- (69) a. Ze is een **eurofederaliste** die pleit voor meer bevoegdheden voor de
 She is a Eurofederalist.F who pleads for more power for the
 Europese Unie.
 European Union.

‘She is a Eurofederalist who argues for more power for the European Union.’

(*Knack*, 3 July, 2019)

- b. Zij is een zelfverklaard **eurofederalist** die macht en slagkracht van de
 She is a self-proclaimed Eurofederalist.¬F who power and strength of the
 Unie wil uitbreiden ten koste van soevereiniteit van lidstaten.
 Union wants expand at cost of sovereignty of member.states

‘She is a self-proclaimed Eurofederalist who wants to expand the power and the strength of the Union, at the cost of the sovereignty of member states.’

(*NRC*, 3 July, 2019)

The impact of neutralisation as a conscious and effective strategy of gender-fair language use

has had some structural implications for the Dutch morphological feminisation system. It was demonstrated in Chapter 5 that the two productive suffixes in Standard Dutch – both in the North and the South – are *-ster* and *-e*. An analysis of the effects of neutralisation on the Dutch feminisation system shows that active neutralisation is synonymous with blocking the productivity of *-ster* and *-e*. As shown before, relative type counts (i.e., relative to the total amount of feminised types) are a legitimate productivity measure for allomorphs that are each other’s competitors in saturating the “onomasiological market” (Baayen 2009: 206). Relative type frequencies of both *-ster* and *-e* decline diachronically in Northern sources. However, in Southern sources, only *-ster* is in decline; *-e* even seems to have gained ground over time. This is displayed in Fig. 6.16, which shows the distribution of *-ster*, *-e* and other feminising patterns on the type level in Flemish and Dutch media by period (or an overview, cf. Section 5.2).

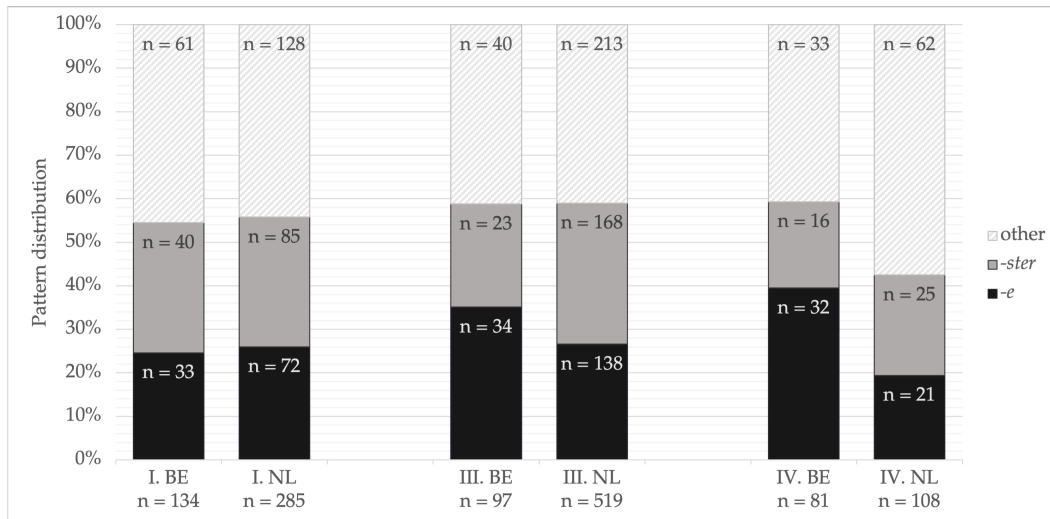


Figure 6.16: Distribution of the productive patterns *-ster* and *-e*, compared to other patterns, with n = number of types following a pattern. These include *-es*, *-in*, compounds with *-vrouw*, inhabitant names in *-se* and nonnative unproductive suffixes in loan words. Due to a lack of data from Period II. in Flemish news media, it is not represented here.

After 2016, when the productive suffixes *-ster* and *-e* are blocked, the relative proportion of other patterns widens. In all other datasets, the combined productivity of *-ster* and *-e* outweighs other categories. These changing proportions are at first inconclusive for determining the nature of the change. From these results, an interpretation that patterns which

are deemed unproductive become productive over time would also be possible. We know, however, that this is not the case, even without knowledge about corpus size. The proportion of tokens that are feminised by *-ster*, *-e*, or other patterns, relative to the proportion of tokens that are feminisable by means of these patterns, demonstrates this. In other words, the question is: how many tokens that are feminisable by *-ster*, *-e*, or other patterns, are actually feminised by them? The numbers that answer that question are shown in Fig. 6.17. The graphs demonstrate the relation of the realised productivity of the patterns to the potential contexts¹⁵³ in which they can occur.

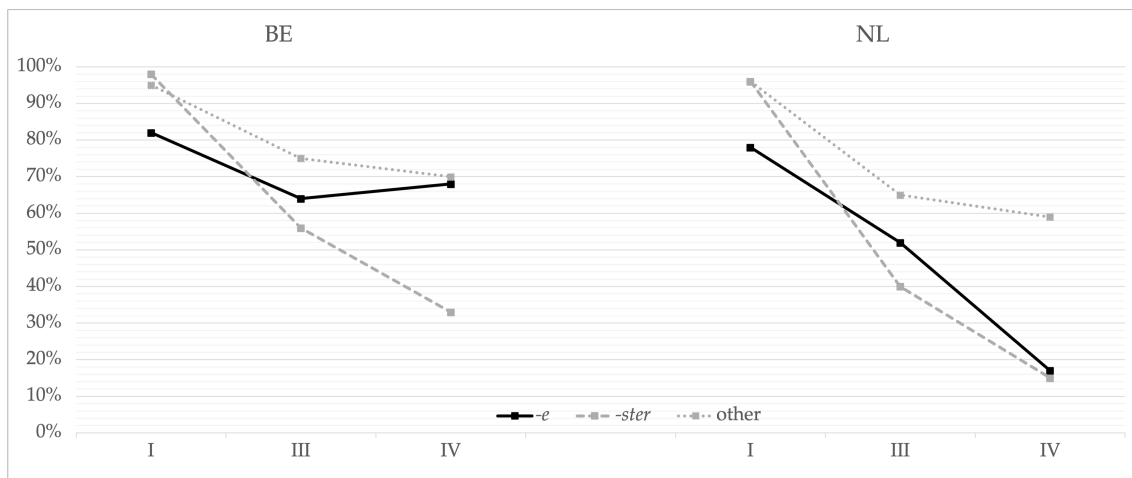


Figure 6.17: Realised productivity per pattern in the corpus, which is proportional to all contexts (PNs) that are feminisable by the respective pattern, by period.

The graphs demonstrate, for example, that the realised productivity of *-ster* in both Flemish and Dutch news media in Period I (i.e., before 1960) is nearly 100%. Put differently, of all nouns feminisable by *-ster*, nearly 100% are actually feminised by *-ster* in that sample. By contrast, that number has decreased over time to a little over 30% in Flemish media and about 15% in Dutch media. It is thus clear from the data represented in the figure that feminisation decreases in every category, but (much) more so in Dutch sources than in Flemish sources. Significant and non-significant changes in the transition from Period I to III, and again from Period III to IV, are listed in Table 6.9. Here, it is shown that significant changes in the productivity of every pattern occur twice in Dutch data (from Period I to

¹⁵³This is their potential productivity in the corpus.

III, and from Period III to IV), whereas significant changes only occur once in Flemish data, save for the continuous decreasing productivity of *-ster*.

		I → III		III → IV	
		χ^2	p	χ^2	p
<i>-ster</i>	BE	48.896	< .001***	9.000	< .01**
	NL	239.32	< .001***	61.488	< .001***
<i>-e</i>	BE	6.998	< .01**	0.166	0.684
	NL	45.478	< .001***	69.017	< .001***
other	BE	21.528	< .001***	0.704	0.401
	NL	209.34	< .001***	4.548	< .05*

Table 6.9: Significantly and non-significantly decreasing productivity degrees of feminisation patterns in Dutch and Flemish news media.

Thus, for the pattern *-e*, no significant changes can be discerned in the last decades in Flemish sources. The Dutch neutralisation strategies have had a strong impact on the productivity degrees of all patterns, but most prominently on *-ster* and *-e*. Lexicalisation of feminised PNs following other patterns explains the less prominent change here.

Next to diachronic intraregional differences, there are contrasts between the Flemish and Dutch sources as well. In Period I (1828-1950/1959), the starting point, there is no significant variation concerning productivity degrees of various patterns in Dutch and Belgian data. All feminisation patterns behave alike in the two regions. This is listed in Table 6.10, with the respective chi-square tests, which point to no statistically significant difference between the two regions by pattern.

	BE		NL		χ^2	p-value
	F	\neg F	F	\neg F		
<i>-ster</i>	96	1	217	8	0.80	0.37
<i>-e</i>	86	19	162	45	0.37	0.54
other	140	7	569	23	0.06	0.80

Table 6.10: Feminised (F) vs. non-feminised (\neg F) tokens per feminisation pattern in Belgian and Dutch news media (1828-1959). Chi-square tests reveal that there are no significant contrasts between the regions per pattern.

However, by Period III (1980/2005-2015), differences between Belgian and Dutch data have become significant (cf. Table 6.11). While *-ster* is undisputedly productive in Period I, it is the pattern that experiences the most radical change in both regions by Period III.

	BE		NL		χ^2	p-value
	F	\neg F	F	\neg F		
<i>-ster</i>	50	40	450	676	8.37	< .01**
<i>-e</i>	47	26	416	380	3.95	< .05*
other	79	26	952	507	4.35	< .05*

Table 6.11: Feminised (F) vs. non-feminised (\neg F) tokens per feminisation pattern in Belgian and Dutch news media (1980-2015). Chi-square tests reveal significant contrasts between the regions for each pattern, most prominently *-ster*.

By 2016 (Period IV), the difference in the productivity degrees of *-ster* and *-e* between Flemish and Dutch media has become even more prominent, as shown in Table 6.12.

	BE		NL		χ^2	p-value
	F	¬F	F	¬F		
<i>-ster</i>	30	60	44	244	13.08	< .001***
<i>-e</i>	50	24	30	142	54.98	< .001***
other	80	34	172	121	4.11	< .05*

Table 6.12: Feminised vs. non-feminised tokens per feminisation pattern in Belgian and Dutch news media (2016-2020). Chi-square tests reveal significant contrasts between the regions for each pattern, most prominently *-ster* and *-e*.

Effect size calculations indicate that the use of *-e* in news media is indeed the the most prominent difference between the two investigated regions. A comparison of the respective Φ -values demonstrate that the decrease in use of *-e* between the periods I (until 1959) and IV (2016-2020) is more radical in Northern Dutch media (cf. the difference in Φ -values between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch in Table 6.13, with a weak association of 0.165 for Belgian Dutch and a strong association of 0.606 for Northern Dutch). In short, while the use of *-ster* has experienced a significant and strongly effective decrease in both regions, and patterns other than *-ster* and *-e* have decreased comparably strongly as well, the main difference in recent years is the use of *-e*.

	χ^2		p-value		Φ	
	BE	NL	BE	NL	BE	NL
<i>-ster</i>	91.503	332.97	< .001***	< .001***	0.699	0.806
<i>-e</i>	4.888	139.02	< .05*	< .001***	0.165	0.606
other	30.459	201.36	< .001***	< .001***	0.342	0.477

Table 6.13: Significance and effect size of decreasing use of various feminising patterns in Belgian and Northern Dutch data between Period I (1828/1880-1950/1959) and Period IV (2016-2020), based on the absolute numbers displayed in Tables 6.10 and 6.12. The effect size, indicated by Φ , is stronger in Northern Dutch data for each pattern, but most significantly for *-e*.

The corpus study in Chapter 5 already hinted at a somewhat stronger prevalence of *-e* in Belgian newspapers compared to Dutch newspapers (cf. Table 5.17 in Section 5.2.1.5). Being a French loan suffix, the popularity of *-e* in Flemish news media may be related to

its proximity to French. While the productivity of *-e* has experienced a further significant decrease in Dutch sources, in Belgian media it has remained stable since Period III. In the transition from Period III (2005-2015) to Period IV (2016-2020) in Flemish data (as shown in Fig. 6.17 above), it even increases slightly. When adding the data in Chapter 5 to the data here, it seems that *-e* is socially marked in Flanders: it is a productive suffix in formal contexts, where it is used to maximise the contrast with informal contexts, in which its absence is significant. Its increasing productivity, together with the blocking of *-ster* through neutralisation, challenges the number-one status of *-ster* in Flemish, which in Standard Dutch is undisputedly the pattern with the highest realised productivity. Table 6.14 contains forms in *-e* in Flemish news media in Period IV. As was already shown, these forms do not conform to the prototypical semantics of feminised nouns in Dutch data, which adds to their markedness and speaks in favour of the social-connotation analysis of the pattern in Flemish.

4	<i>activiste</i> ‘activist.F’, <i>feministe</i> ‘feminist.F’
3	<i>artieste</i> ‘artist.F’, <i>gymnaste</i> ‘gymnast.F’, <i>studente</i> ‘student.F’
2	<i>advocate</i> ‘lawyer.F’, <i>federaliste</i> ‘federalist.F’, <i>kampioene</i> ‘champion.F’, <i>magistrate</i> ‘magistrate.F’, <i>muzikante</i> ‘musician.F’, <i>psychologe</i> ‘psychologist.F’
1	<i>adolescente</i> ‘adolescent.F’, <i>agente</i> ‘agent.F’, <i>astronaute</i> ‘astronaut.F’, <i>atlete</i> ‘athlete.F’, <i>choreografe</i> ‘choreographer.F’, <i>correspondente</i> ‘correspondent.F’, <i>democrate</i> ‘democrat.F’, <i>ecologiste</i> ‘ecologist.F’, <i>erfgename</i> ‘heiress’, <i>fluitiste</i> ‘flutist.F’, <i>genote</i> ‘companion.F’, <i>gitariste</i> ‘guitarist.F’, <i>journaliste</i> ‘journalist.F’, <i>kandidate</i> ‘candidate.F’, <i>leerlinge</i> ‘pupil.F’, <i>militante</i> ‘militant.F’, <i>psychopate</i> ‘psychopath.F’, <i>terroriste</i> ‘terrorist.F’, <i>therapeute</i> ‘therapist.F’, <i>veterane</i> ‘veteran.F’, <i>vluchtelingen</i> ‘refugee.F’

Table 6.14: Feminised types in *-e* with their token frequencies in Flemish news media (2016-2020).

In sum, both *-ster* and *-e* have been strongly affected by neutralisation in Dutch news media. While tokens that are feminisable by *-ster* nearly always follow this pattern in the starting period, less than 20% of these tokens are now feminised through *-ster*. This is also true for

-e, which started out as a somewhat less productive pattern (ca. 80% of tokens feminisable in -e were feminised by -e in Period I). In Belgian data, every pattern has remained more productive than in Dutch media, but -e is exceptional in that its productivity has remained stable in recent decades. In fact, the difference between the starting and the ending point of -e in Belgian media is only marginally significant. It has undisputedly become the most productive pattern. The unproductive patterns in Dutch sources after 2016 outnumber types in -ster and -e and are less affected by neutralisation, because their members are more lexicalised. Dictionaries such as *Van Dale*¹⁵⁴ and the *WNT*¹⁵⁵ contain the lemma *actrice* ‘actress’, but not *speelster* ‘player.F’. The latter is recorded under the non-feminised lemma *voetballer* ‘football player.¬F’. In other words, they do not occur as neutralised forms, because the lexical semantics of non-feminised forms prohibit this. On a last note concerning the productivity degree of -e in Flemish, in recent years it is also attested as a feminisation device in the epicene noun *leerkracht* ‘teacher’ → *leerkrachte* ‘teacher.F’. This noun is actually formed as a neutral alternative to the binarily constructed pair *leraar-lerares* ‘teacher.¬F-teacher.F’. However, its frequent use in reference to specific rather than generic referents likely caused its reanalysis as a regular PN (cf. Verelst 2023), and is sometimes feminised. On the platform X (formerly Twitter), all 20 occurrences of *leerkrachte* in the last two years (2022-2023) stem from Flemish sources. The aforementioned form *soprane* ‘soprano.F’ also counts as such a phenomenon. It only occurs four times in the JSI corpus, but three of those are of Belgian origin, even though only 27.2% of data in the corpus is Flemish.

In sustaining a productive pattern -e, Flemish data does comply with apparent semantic restrictions that apply to feminised PNs in Dutch data. The following section deals with the question of which PNs remain feminised in Dutch data, in spite of neutralisation policies. Both the lexicalisation of PNs with unproductive feminising morphemes, and the semantics of the PN itself are relevant.

¹⁵⁴<https://www.vandale.nl/> [Accessed 24-11-2023].

¹⁵⁵<https://gtb.ivdnt.org/search/?owner=wnt> [Accessed 24-11-2023].

6.2.2.4 Full *zij* and attenuated *ze* The prototypical feminised PN preferably follows *zij* (70a) rather than *ze* (70b).

- (70) a. **Zij** is een gevierd **schrijfster**, die alleen woont met haar katten.
 she is a celebrated writer.F who alone lives with her cats
 ‘She is an acclaimed writer who lives alone with her cats.’

(*Algemeen Dagblad*, 13 July, 2019)

- b. **Ze** is een **schrijver** en **dichter**, tenslotte, die het zware altijd afwisselt
 She is a writer.¬F and poet.¬F after.all who the heavy always varies
 met lichtheid en humor.
 with lightness and humor
 ‘She is a writer and a poet, after all, who always varies heaviness with lightness and humor.’

(*De Volkskrant*, 16 March, 2019)

Dutch data shows a correlation between the full pronoun *zij* and the use of feminising morphology. First of all, full *zij* was the default pronoun in the predicative construction until ca. 1960. Thereafter the attenuated pronoun *ze* takes over the leading position of *zij*, as seen in Fig. 6.18.

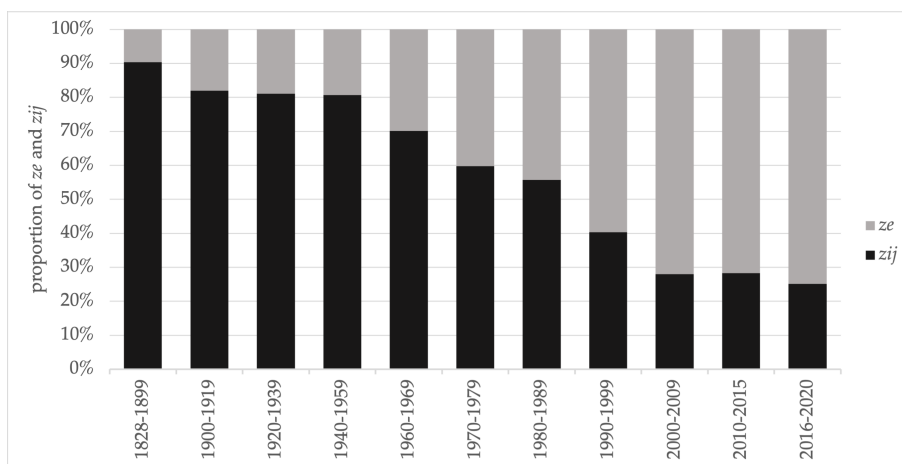


Figure 6.18: Distribution of constructions with *zij* vs. *ze* in Northern Dutch data, relative to the total amount of constructions by period (1828-2020).

Moreover, pronoun choice has an effect on the probability of a PN being feminised. As seen in Fig. 6.18 above, the ratio of *zij* descends toward the 50% mark in the 1980s, and this tendency

further advances in the following decades. In the 1990s *ze* already outnumbers *zij* by 10%. This shift is only already visible in VK in the 1980s. Simultaneously, neutralising language policies crop up, causing the number of feminised PNs to significantly fall as well. Both processes go hand in hand with feminisation becoming a stronger feature of constructions following full *zij* than attenuated *ze*, as displayed in Fig. 6.18.

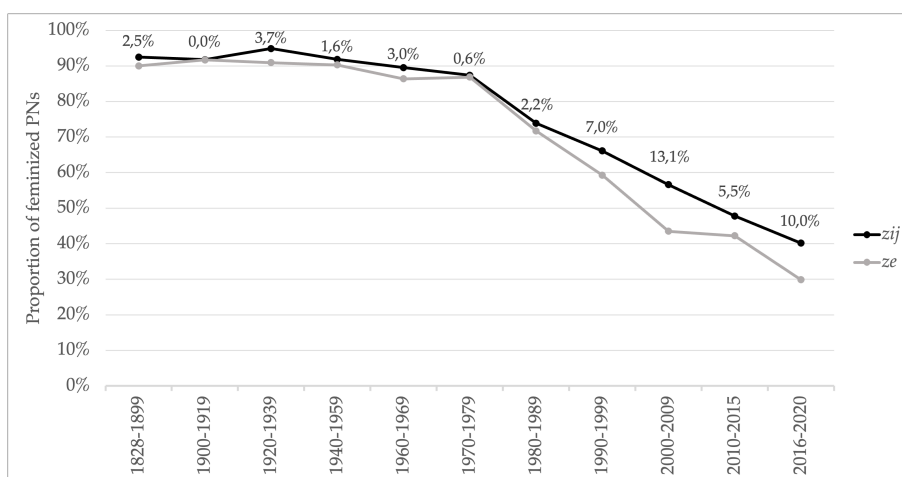


Figure 6.19: Proportion of feminised PNs in constructions with *zij* and *ze* in Northern Dutch data (1828-2020). Percentual differences between feminisation after *zij* versus feminisation after *ze* are displayed.

The more the use of feminising morphology decreases, the more what remains of it inclines toward *zij*. In the period 2000-2009, feminising morphology is significantly more likely to occur after *zij* than *ze* ($\chi^2 = 16.802$, $p < .001^{***}$). This observed tendency may be linked with the contrastive function of *zij* (cf. Section 6.1.2.1), in which the pronoun serves as an emphasising element in contrasting two or more referents, as in (71-73).

- (71) **Zij** is een **patiënte**, hij is zijn balans kwijt, wie de waarheid vertelt weet
 She is a patient.F he has his balance lost who the truth tells knows
 niemand.
 nobody
 ‘She is a patient, he has lost his balance, nobody knows who is telling the truth.’

(*De Volkskrant*, 19 February, 2010)

- (72) **Zij** is een joodse **feministe**, hij een orthodoxe rabbijn.
 She is a jewish feminist.F he an orthodox rabbi

‘She is a jewish feminist, and he is an orthodox rabbi.’

(*Trouw*, 5 May, 2012)

- (73) Die Iraanse Amerikaan was een vreselijke boeman en **zij** is een **heldin**.
That Iranian American was a terrible bogeyman and she is a hero.F
‘That Iranian American was a terrible bogeyman and she is a hero.’

(*AD*, 23 August, 2016)

This emphasis of the feminine pronoun, which has become largely restricted to [human] referents (Audring 2009: 47-48), may thereby emphasise a [female] reading and thus give way to feminisation.

Another theoretical consideration, outlined in Section 6.1.2, may be related to the lower accessibility (cf. Vogels et al. 2013, 2014, 2019) of a referent that is linked with full pronouns. Lower accessibility is associated with the necessity of facilitating referent-tracking, and thus the occurrence of feminisation. The attenuated pronoun *ze* commonly presupposes a referent which is highly accessible in the context, i.e., one which has already been introduced and whose characteristics are already known. An emphasis on the referent’s sex may in such contexts, in which the referent has already been introduced and is therefore known, be of less relevance than in contexts in which the full pronoun *zij* usually occurs. Consider the example in (74).

- (74) **Zij** is een 48-jarige **lerares** Engels uit Brooklyn. **Ze** heeft drie zonen
She is a 48-year-old teacher English from Brooklyn She has three sons
opgevoed.
brought.up

‘She is a 48-year-old English teacher from Brooklyn. She has brought up three sons.’

(*De Volkskrant*, 22 July, 2013)

The example is illustrative of a context in which the referent is first introduced by means of the full pronoun *zij*, while in the next sentence, the now familiar referent is referred to by the attenuated pronoun *ze*. Lastly, the example in (75) combines the features of contrast (*zij* ‘she’ vs. *hij* ‘he’) and accessibility (*zij* vs. *ze*):

(75) **Zij** is een slimme, perfectionistische **Friezin** met een schalkse lach. **Ze** is She is a smart perfectionist Frisian.F with a mischievous smile She is even lichtvoetig op het ijs als gevoelig erbuiten. **Hij** is een onberekenbare as light-footed on the ice as sensitive outside He is an unpredictable rauwdouwer uit Noord-Holland [...]. tomboy from North-Holland ...

‘She is a smart, perfectionist Frisian with a mischievous smile. She is as light-footed on the ice as she is sensitive outside of it. He is an unpredictable tomboy from North-Holland.’

(*De Volkskrant*, 26 November, 2012)

Flemish data is comparable to Northern Dutch data in that the proportion of *zij*-constructions to all predicative constructions in the data decreases strongly over time, showing a clear preference for *ze*-constructions in recent decades (cf. Fig. 6.20).

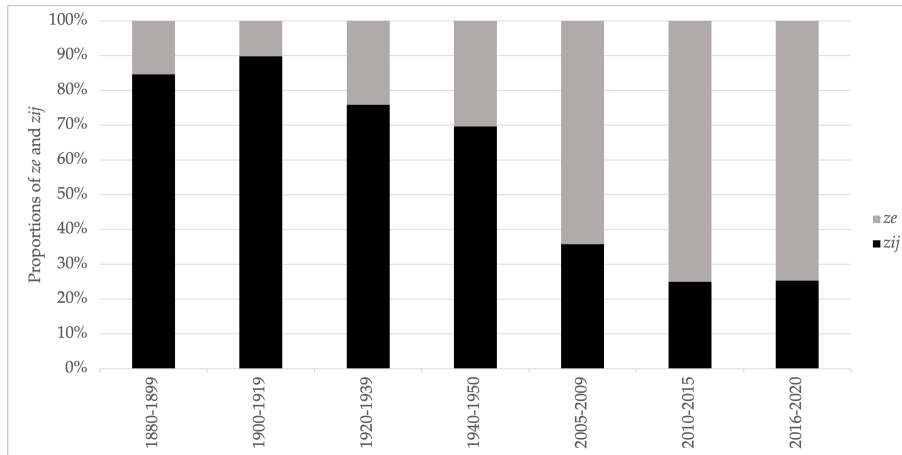


Figure 6.20: Distribution of constructions with *zij* vs. *ze* in Flemish data, relative to the total amount of constructions by period (1880-2020).

However, there are no statistically significant differences between feminisation after *zij* versus *ze*. This is a consequence of the lower number of constructions available in Flemish data, especially in the 1940-1950 and the 2010-2015 time frames, and of the fact that feminisation is still a more active system in Southern Dutch. Despite a lack of significance, a preference of feminisation for constructions with *zij* is visible in Flemish data as well. The unexpectedly low value of feminised items in a *zij*-construction compared to feminised items in a *ze*-

construction during the period 2010-2015 (cf. Fig. 6.21) is due to the low number of *zij*-constructions found here (only 19).

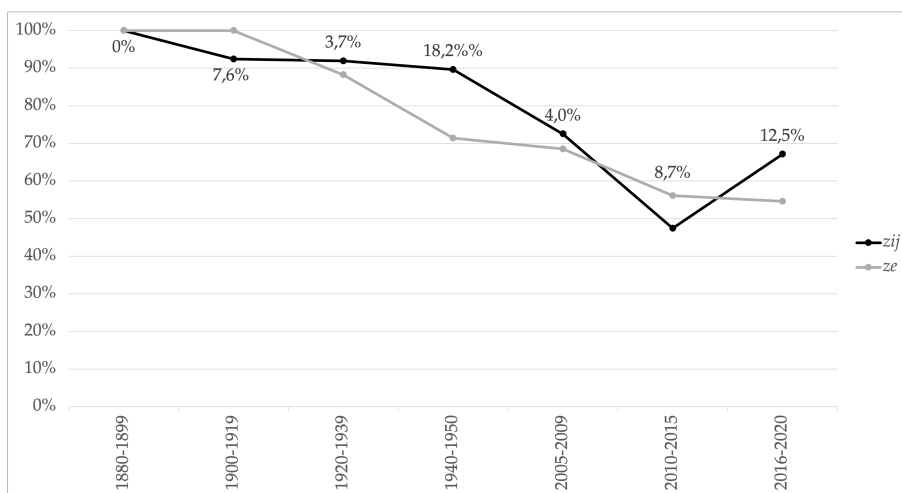


Figure 6.21: Proportion of feminised PNs in constructions with *zij* and *ze* in Flemish data (1880-2020). Percentual differences between feminisation after *zij* versus feminisation after *ze* are displayed.

Both Northern and Southern Dutch data demonstrate that feminisation becomes increasingly associated with *zij*-contexts when feminisation itself becomes less common.

6.2.2.5 The role of referentiality in predicative constructions The prototypical feminised PN prefers referent-tracking functions (77) over predication (76):

- (76) Ze is een wat stijve **politicus**, die alles onder controle wil
 She is a.UTR somewhat stiff politician.¬F who everything under control wants
 hebben en niet houdt van verrassingen, reden dat ze zo ziedend was over
 have and not loves of surprises reason that she so furious was about
 Junckers Downing Streetlek.
 Juncker’s Downing Street.leak
 ‘She is a somewhat stiff politician who wants to have everything under control, and
 who doesn’t like surprises, which is the reason why she was so furious about Juncker’s
 Downing-Street leak.’

(*De Volkskrant*, 3 June, 2017)

(77) De Duitse **politica** Frauke Petry [...] wordt door justitie vervolgd
 The.UTR German politician.F Frauke Petry [...] is by authorities prosecuted
 wegens meened. De **politica** wordt ervan beschuldigd op 12
 because.of perjury. The.UTR politician.F is thereof accused on 12
 november 2015 onder ede onwaarheden verteld te hebben.
 November 2015 under oath untruths told to have
 ‘The German politician Frauke Petry is being prosecuted on grounds of perjury. The
 politician is accused of having told untruths under oath on November 12, 2015.’

(*NRC*, 4 October, 2017 [in JSI 2014-2021: 613217481])

The example in (77) demonstrates that the same sources that actively make use of neutralisation guidelines do feminise in contexts that are highly referential. The referent *de Duitse politica Frauke Petry* is first introduced, and after two sentences recurs in subject position. In both sentences, the PN *politica* is feminised. It was theorised that predicative positions are best suited for tracking changes in the feminisation system in the direction of neutralisation, because feminisation is less needed as a referent-tracking device in these contexts. The ten most common nouns to appear as neutralised forms in Dutch newspapers after 2016 are listed in the following table:

	TYPE		f _{-F}	f _F
1.	<i>vechter</i>	‘fighter’	15	0
2.	<i>voorstander</i>	‘proponent’	10	0
3.	<i>overlever</i>	‘survivor’	9	0
4.	<i>schrijver</i>	‘author’	9	5
5.	<i>leider</i>	‘leader’	8	0
6.	<i>spreker</i>	‘speaker’	8	0
7.	<i>aanhanger</i>	‘supporter’	7	0
8.	<i>kandidaat</i>	‘candidate’	7	0
9.	<i>liefhebber</i>	‘enthusiast’	7	0
10.	<i>politicus</i>	‘politician’	7	5

Table 6.15: Neutralised PNs in Dutch newspapers and their token frequencies as non-feminised and feminised forms.

With 87 non-feminised tokens in predicative constructions and ten feminised tokens (corresponding to only two of the types), these ten types are unlikely to appear as feminised tokens

(10.3% are thus feminised). Based on the example in (77), we can now assume that these forms are more likely to occur as feminised forms in referential contexts. Drawing from data from the five Dutch newspapers that are investigated in this case study, this does appear to be the case at first glance. The JSI 2014-2021 corpus was used for this purpose, and the ten most frequently neutralised forms were searched for in sentence-initial position, preceded by a definite article, because definiteness is related to referentiality as well (cf. Section 2.3.2). These PNs were followed by a finite verb, ensuring that they are agentive as well. Hence, constructions with a high referentiality degree of the form [*De* N *V-t*] were searched for, whereby N is a feminised or non-feminised PN, and *V-t* is a finite verb in the third person singular.¹⁵⁶ Example constructions are *De voorstander zegt* ‘the proponent. \neg F says’ or *De schrijfster reist* ‘the writer.F travels’. Not all of the above appear in such positions, especially when they are neither a profession nor agentive. This is shown in Table 6.16, which lists the ten items with their feminised counterparts, and the absolute number of occurrences found with a male and a female referent for each form. Thus, there are, for instance, 20 occurrences of *De schrijver V-t* ‘the writer. \neg F V-s’, in which the writer is male, and six occurrences of the same construction in which the writer is female. There are no occurrences of a male referent to a feminised PN.

¹⁵⁶The search query in the SketchEngine is [word="De"][word="*x*"][word=".*t" & tag ="verb.*"], whereby *x* is a variable feminised or non-feminised PN.

	[De ... V-t]		Male ref.	Female ref.
1.	<i>vechter</i>	‘fighter’	1	0
	<i>vechtster</i>		0	0
2.	<i>voorstander</i>	‘proponent’	0	0
	<i>voorstandster</i>		0	0
3.	<i>overlever</i>	‘survivor’	0	0
	<i>overleefster</i>		0	0
4.	<i>schrijver</i>	‘author’	109	6
	<i>schrijfster</i>		0	70
5.	<i>leider</i>	‘leader’	20	0
	<i>leidster</i>		0	1
6.	<i>spreker</i>	‘speaker’	4	1
	<i>spreekster</i>		0	0
7.	<i>aanhanger</i>	‘supporter’	0	0
	<i>aanhangster</i>		0	0
8.	<i>kandidaat</i>	‘candidate’	2	1
	<i>kandidate</i>		0	3
9.	<i>liefhebber</i>	‘enthusiast’	1	0
	<i>liefhebster</i>		0	0
10.	<i>politicus</i>	‘politician’	98	3
	<i>politica</i>		0	52

Table 6.16: PNs with referential function in Dutch news media and their referents.

The numbers in the table expose a preference for feminisation in referential contexts, even for PNs which are preferably and regularly neutralised in non-referential, predicative contexts. The most prominent items are *schrijfster* ‘writer.F’ and *politica* ‘politician.F’, which heavily outnumber their non-feminised counterparts in case of a female referent. In total, 126 (92.0%) feminised tokens have a female referent in these referential contexts, compared to 11 non-feminised tokens (8.0%). Hence, compared to predicative contexts in the same sources and the same period, there is a significant¹⁵⁷ preference for feminisation of the same items in referential contexts.

Although this study takes developments in non-referential contexts into focus, the data in the table above suggest that feminisation is still productive in referential contexts in Dutch

¹⁵⁷ $\chi^2 = 155.59, p < .001^{***}$.

newspapers, even when neutralisation is an official guideline. This can be linked directly with the pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy, which predicts that conceptual agreement (as is the case in feminisation) is more likely in referent-tracking functions than in predicating (cf. Section 2.3.2). Further research may provide a more detailed account.

6.2.3 Conclusion: feminisation in Dutch and Flemish news media

Sex marking on PNs has been in decline both in Northern Dutch and in Flemish news media, although a range of factors can be discerned which contribute to different outcomes for Northern and Southern Dutch. It was shown that for mainly Northern Dutch newspapers that the process of decline of feminisation on PNs in predicative constructions is accelerated by language policies, or at least that significant changes in the feminisation system in Northern Dutch media coincide with neutralisation guidelines. Neutralisation guidelines by the newspapers NRC and VK as of 2016 are by no means innovative; they follow a long-standing tradition that can be traced back to politically endorsed feminist language reform from the 1980s onward. Significant decrease of the use of feminising morphology is already visible in the 1960s and 1970s, which suggests that feminist views (in the Netherlands) build on an already existing tendency not to feminise “new” PNs, i.e., PNs which are relatively young in reference to women. In line with expectations concerning systemic preconditions for gender marking on PNs, Flemish news media make use of feminising morphology more often than Dutch news media do. While neutralisation means a stagnation of productive feminisation patterns for Dutch, the pattern *-e* has proven to be popular in Flemish news media. During the time that masculine and feminine adnominal inflection was artificially upheld in Northern Dutch prescriptive grammars, the inflected feminine article, followed by a feminised PN, was still regularly used in Dutch newspapers as well. This tradition lasted longer in Flemish news media, although the masculine/feminine distinction is closer to the Flemish reality. Although all investigated PNs serve the function of predication, a pronoun effect was found that can be connected with referentiality and accessibility of the referent. After the neutralisation of PNs became the default in the period 2000-2009 (with over 50%

of PNs non-feminised), feminised PNs are significantly more likely to occur after full *zij* than after reduced *ze*. This can be analysed as an effect of referentiality, because full *zij* is linked with less accessible referents. Such contexts are more likely to require linguistic means for referent-tracking, which is provided by the feminising suffix. After 2016, about one third of PNs in reference to women are feminised. We can assume that these PNs (provisionally) constitute the semantic “rest”, i.e., the remaining set of nouns which are likely not neutralised for one of two reasons: 1) they are lexicalised, or 2) they occur in a PN whose denotation is linked with social gender (sports, where men and women traditionally compete in separate groups, and identity features, above all inhabitant names).

6.3 German

6.3.1 Results

For every newspaper the total number of PNs in the predicative [*sie ist* N]-construction is listed below in Table 6.17. Each number thus represents a PNs as tokens in the corpus.

	WEST				EAST				SUM
	SP	DZ	TS	NN	ND	BZ	PNN	DNN	
1945-1959	22	12			71	56			161
1960-1969	10	30			97	95			232
1970-1979	11	49			84	90			234
1980-1990	48	93			80	87			308
1991-1999	51	123	35	75		210			494
2000-2009	139	228	215	153		264	65		1064
2010-2015	97	270		209	15	26	72	121	810
2016-2020	115	181		167	118	69	151	249	1050
SUM	493	986	250	604	465	897	288	370	<u>4353</u>

Table 6.17: PNs in predicative position in German news media, 1945-2020.

FRG data until 1990 stems from SP and DZ, GDR data stems from BZ and ND. Before turning to German data after 1990, Fig. 6.22 displays the proportion of feminised PNs to all PNs in East and West German data. As the figure shows, feminisation generally occurs

more often in West German sources.

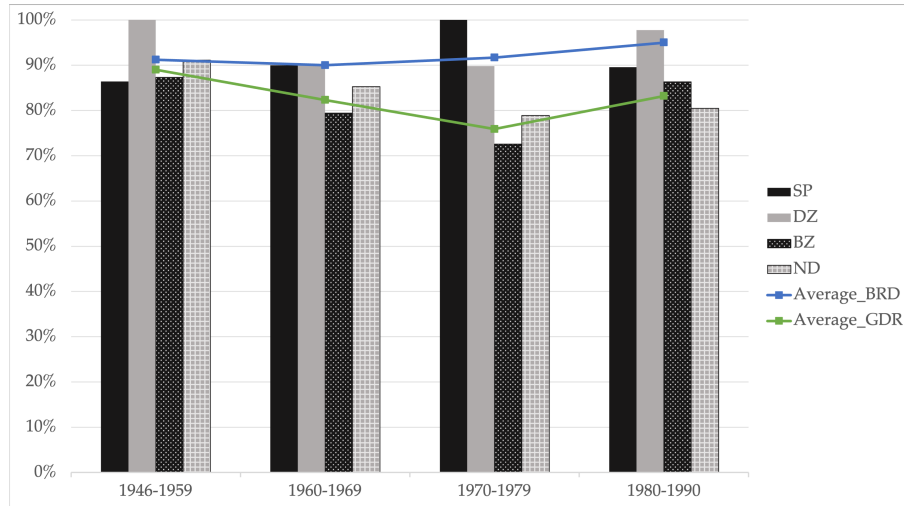


Figure 6.22: Feminised PNs in East and West German news media (1946-2020), relative to the total amount of PNs by period.

The difference between East and West is significant in the 1970s ($\chi^2 = 6.943$, $p < .01^{**}$) and the 1980s only ($\chi^2 = 10.572$, $p < .01^{**}$). After 1990, however, PNs with a female referent, even in the predicative position, are feminised by default in all news media (Fig. 6.23). Each statistically significant difference between East and West is undone immediately after 1990.

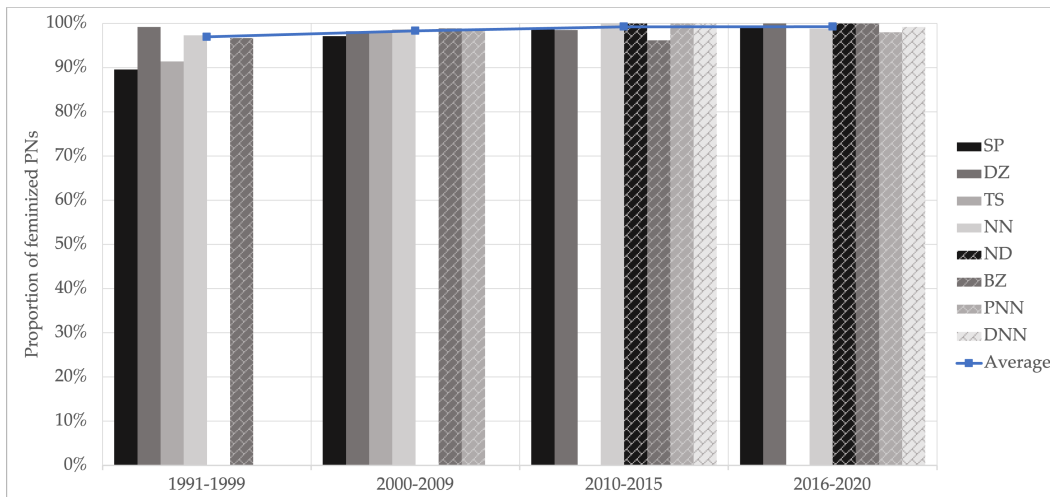


Figure 6.23: Proportion of feminised PNs to all PNs in German news media, 1991-2020.

The following sections discuss the situation in the FRG and the GDR. As opposed to Dutch

data, in which the remaining feminised forms were of interest, the focus for German data lies with the nouns that are not feminised, specifically in the GDR.

6.3.2 Discussion

6.3.2.1 West (FRG) Generic use of masculine PNs in German newspapers overall are scarce, with the exception of GDR data. Over a total amount of 3693 tokens denoting women in the predicative construction in all non-GDR newspapers¹⁵⁸ throughout the investigated decades, there are no more than 66 (1.8%) non-feminised tokens, spread over 31 different types (cf. Table 6.18). Apart from 18 types (a mere 0.5% of all PNs) whose generic use appears idiosyncratic, these types can be grouped together into four difference categories which are notoriously feminisation-averse:

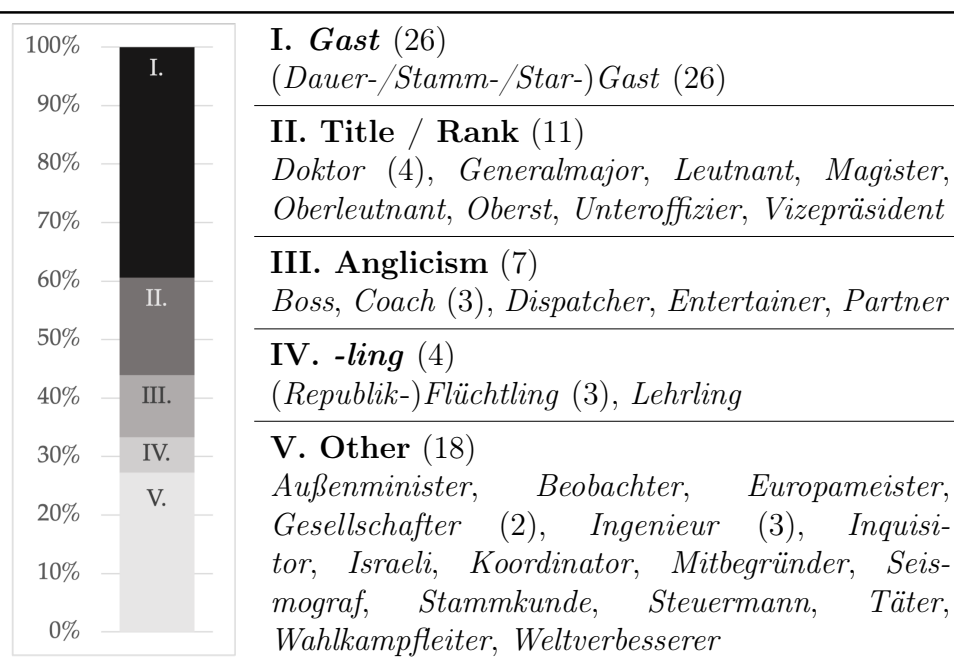


Table 6.18: Non-feminised, masculine PNs in FRG data. Token frequencies are included in parentheses after a type, if it is not a hapax.

x *Gast* ‘guest.→F’ occurs most frequently, as a simplex or in a compound:

¹⁵⁸All data from SP, DZ, TS, NN, PNN, and DNN, as well as data from BZ and ND after 1990.

- (78) Sie ist **Stammgast** in der New Yorker Pioniergalerie Castelli, wo sie is regular.guest.MASC in the New York Pioneer.Gallery Castelli where gerade vor Weihnachten eine Schau mit “Atta Troll”, aber auch mit einer now before Christmas a show with Atta Troll but also with a neuen Arbeit, “Wende 80”, zu Ende ging. new work Wende 80 to end went
 ‘She is a regular in the New York Pioneer Gallery Castelli, where a show with “Atta Trol”, but also with a new work, “Wende 8”, ended just before Christmas.’

(S82/JAN.00412 – *Der Spiegel*, 25 January, 1982)

Nonetheless, the feminisation of *Gast* fluctuates diachronically. This fluctuation has been part of the history of German. In MHG it occurred both feminised and non-feminised (Kopf 2023: 201-203). It reached its heydays before the 18th century, after which it became scarce, until its frequency was increased again in the first half of the 19th century, with yet another decline by the 20th (cf. Fig. 6.24 and Stefanowitsch 2015). It has gained ground again in particular in newspapers in recent years (Fig. 6.25),¹⁵⁹ and was added to the Duden dictionary in 2013.

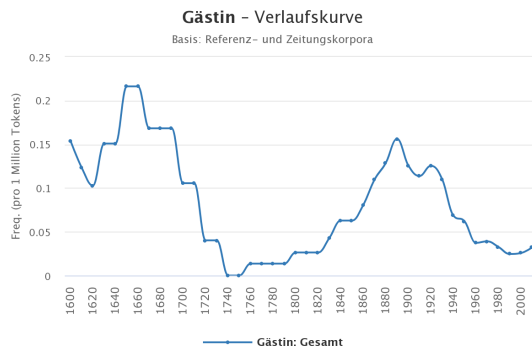


Figure 6.24: Relative token frequencies of *Gästin* ‘guest.F’ per million corpus tokens in DWDS corpora.

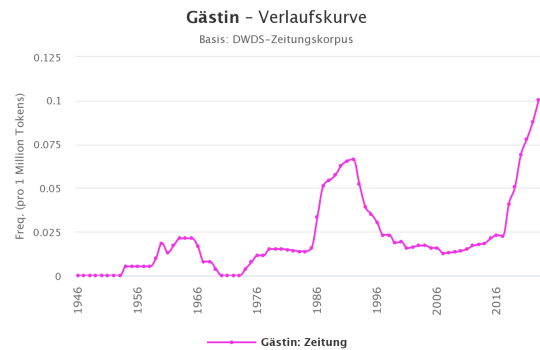


Figure 6.25: Relative token frequencies of *Gästin* ‘guest.F’ per million corpus tokens in the DWDS newspaper corpus only.

Titles and ranks may be ambiguous between the status of feminisable PNs and fixed units, at least when they are used as a description for people. So far, there are no official feminised

¹⁵⁹Both graphs were downloaded from DWDS N-Grams, query “Gästin”: <https://www.dwds.de/r/plot> [Accessed 24-07-2023].

ranks in use (“Verteidigungsministerium plant weibliche Dienstgrade bei der Bundeswehr”, *Der Spiegel*, 11 September, 2020). Moreover, German women have only quite recently, since 2000, gained access to higher military ranks.¹⁶⁰ Hence, low frequencies can be explained by a lack female referents to these ranks, as well as the fact that they do not officially exist as feminised forms. Therefore, examples of military ranks as non-feminised forms, such as (79), are expected:

- (79) Sie ist **Oberleutnant** beim mongolischen Heer und studiert hier im
 she is first.lieutenant.MASC at.the Mongolian army and studies here in
 Rahmen eines Ausbildungsabkommens zwischen der Mongolei und Deutschland.
 context of.a educational.agreement between the Mongolia and Germany
 ‘She is a first lieutenant at the Mongolian army and studies here in the context of an
 education agreement between Mongolia and Germany.’

(DWDS – *Die Zeit*, 25 October, 2001)

In Table 6.19 below, non-feminised ranks found in the corpus are listed with their respective token frequencies (in all usage contexts) in the DWDS newspaper corpora, compared to their occurrences as feminised forms. The ranks listed in the table are mainly higher ones (*Generalmajor* ‘major general’ belongs to the highest rank, *Oberst* ‘colonel’ to the second highest). *Soldatin* ‘soldier.F’, on the other hand, is normally feminised; it does not occur as a masculine in reference to a female soldier (in predicative position) in the corpus and only in examples such as the one in (80).

- (80) Sie ist **Soldatin**. Sie möchte loyal sein. Sie hat ihre Gesundheit verloren, aber
 she is soldier.FEM she wants.to loyal be she has her health lost but
 nicht ihre Lebensrichtung.
 not her life.direction
 ‘She is a soldier. She wants to be loyal. She has lost her health, but not her direction
 in life.’

(DeReKo: S15/JAN.00484 – *Der Spiegel*, 31 January, 2015)

¹⁶⁰Source: <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/organisation/personal/menschen/20-jahre-frauen-bundeswehr> [Accessed 04-10-2023].

Unteroffizier ‘sergeant’ is the lowest of the above ranks and the most frequently feminised, significantly more often than all other ranks in the table (listed from low to high).¹⁶¹ Corpus data shows that military ranks behave differently from “regular” PNs such as *Arzt* ‘doctor.¬F’, *Autor* ‘author.¬F’, and *Student* ‘student.¬F’. In the non-military domain, titles such as *Doktor* ‘doctor’, *Magister* ‘master’, and *Präsident* ‘president’ are more easily feminised.

TYPE		FEM	NON-FEM	RATIO
<i>Unteroffizier</i>	‘sergeant’	22	9.679	1 : 440
<i>Leutnant</i>	‘lieutenant’	2	10.017	1 : 5.009
<i>Oberleutnant</i>	‘first lieutenant’	0	5.767	0 : 5.767
<i>Oberst</i>	‘colonel’	5	27.464	1 : 5.493
<i>Generalmajor</i>	‘major general’	10	13.961	1 : 1.396
<i>Doktor</i>	‘doctor’	161	22.651	1 : 141
<i>Magister</i>	‘master’	0	1.526	0 : 1.526
<i>Präsident</i>	‘president’	20.570	681.073	1 : 33
<i>Arzt</i>	‘doctor’	12.935	218.310	1 : 17
<i>Autor</i>	‘author’	39.756	244.289	1 : 6
<i>Soldat</i>	‘soldier’	2.084	240.603	1 : 115
<i>Student</i>	‘student’	22.266	261.754	1 : 12

Table 6.19: Token frequencies of feminised and non-feminised military ranks, titles, and four other PNs in DWDS newspaper corpora.

Evidently, military ranks and titles do not behave exactly like regular PNs, although there are no clear frequency-based boundaries between the two. In one sentence, a masculine may be combined with a feminine, showing that some titles and ranks are more likely to be feminised than others (*Präsidentin* is considered a political title in the following example):

- (81) Sie ist “**Doktor** der Volksmedizin” und **Präsidentin** des
she is doctor of folk.medicine.MASC and president.FEM of.the
Weltverbandes für traditionelle und alternative Medizin [...].
world.association for traditional and alternative medicine
‘She is a “Doctor of Medicine” and the president of the world association for tradi-
tional and alternative medicine.’

¹⁶¹ *Generalmajor*: $\chi^2 = 9.099$, $p < .01^{**}$; *Leutnant*: $\chi^2 = 15.684$, $p < .001^{***}$; *Oberleutnant*: $\chi^2 = 11.549$, $p < .001^{***}$; *Oberst*: $\chi^2 = 40.143$, $p < .001^{***}$.

(DeReKo: S90/AUG.00152 – *Der Spiegel*, 13 August, 1990)

In the above example, it is evident that *Doktor* and *Präsidentin* are not used in the same way: the former is explicitly used as a title, marked by quotation marks, and therefore an established and invariable unit, whereas the latter is an occupational description rather than a title.

Anglicisms are another category that falls behind the feminisation rule more easily. Five types occur in West German corpus data: *Boss*, *Coach*, *Dispatcher*, *Entertainer*, and *Partner*. Oksaar (1976: 84f.) notes that the structure of English derivatives in *-er*, which fits German morphology, does not pose the same difficulties for German feminisation as do other forms, such as *star* (?*die Starin* ‘the star.F’). The status of a loan word does not pose a restriction to feminisation. Kopf (2022) finds that English *er*-derivates are feminised by default in referential contexts, and some restrictions apply to non-referential, predicative contexts. Frequency of use plays a key role in the adaptation of loan words for the German feminisation system: frequently used forms are integrated faster into the system (Kopf 2022: 84). The integration of anglicisms is also visible by example of four of the five English loans that are found as masculines in the corpus (Fig. 6.26).¹⁶²

¹⁶²Graph downloaded from <https://www.dwds.de/r/plot> [Accessed 04-10-2023]. *Partnerin* ‘partner.F’ is not included, because its relative token frequencies are much higher than those of *Bossin*, *Coachin*, *Dispatcherin*, and *Entertainerin*. This impedes a clear visualisation of all data in one graph.

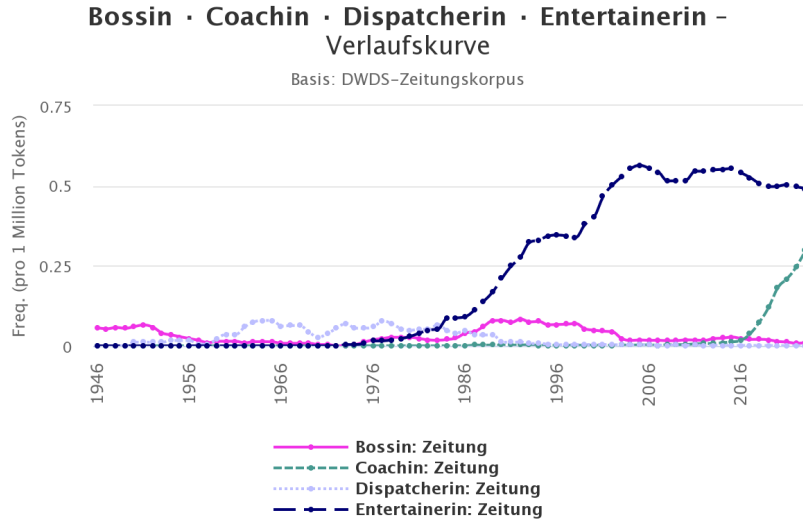


Figure 6.26: The development of the anglicisms *Bossin*, *Coachin*, *Dispatcherin*, and *Entertainerin* in German newspaper corpora (DWDS) in terms of relative token frequencies.

Dispatcherin effectively disappears around 1990 altogether, which appears to be connected with the noun itself: non-feminised *Dispatcher* has also been nearly out of use since around the same time. On the other hand, the PN *Entertainerin*, another *er*-derivate, has expanded since the late 1970s (as a masculine, it is attested in newspapers since 1957). While frequencies of *Bossin* remain low, those of *Coachin* have taken off in recent years (its masculine counterpart became frequent in the late 1980s). Overall, FRG newspapers show a clear tendency to feminise PNs with a female referent in predicative constructions. As opposed to Dutch, semantic features play a less crucial role in the choice for or against feminisation, as usually any noun can be feminised or is adapted to the German feminisation system.

Lastly, two forms end in *-ling* (three times *Flüchtling* ‘refugee.→F’, and once *Lehrling* ‘apprentice.→F’). As opposed to their Dutch counterparts, German *ling*-derivates are notoriously feminisation-averse. It has been shown for *ling*-derivates that the gender of their prototypical referent is either male or unspecified, rather than female (Leonhard & Siegel 2021). Thus, since their referents are only rarely women, this referential property likely causes feminisation to be scarce as well. Notwithstanding the overall reluctance of *ling*-derivates to be feminised synchronically, they have – at least until the 19th century – been

known to be quite prone to feminisation (Stefanowitsch 2015). The suffix originated as the Germanic suffix *-ing*, meaning ‘someone who belongs to X’ and was mainly used patronymically, in combination with the diminutive suffix *-l* (Dammel 2010: 331). Its etymology may explain the reluctance to feminise it.

Other non-feminised forms are subject to idiosyncrasies. The remaining 16 non-feminised types are listed below (Table 6.20) with their respective token frequencies as feminised and non-feminised units in the DWDS newspaper corpora. For some PNs, the ratio of feminised to non-feminised forms is high (e.g., *Europameister*, *Gesellschafter*). Some of these also have low absolute token frequencies as non-feminised PNs (mainly *Inquisitor*, *Seismograf*, and *Weltverbesserer*), which helps explain why they are rarely feminised. Generally, however, neither token frequencies nor formal or semantic properties set these PNs apart from other regular PNs.

TYPE		FEM.	NON-FEM.	RATIO
<i>Außenminister</i>	‘foreign minister’	6.278	206.891	1 : 33
<i>Beobachter</i>	‘observer’	648	59.239	1 : 91
<i>Europameister</i>	‘European champion’	6.416	29.394	1 : 5
<i>Gesellschafter</i>	‘shareholder’	4.529	17.878	1 : 4
<i>Ingenieur</i>	‘engineer’	1.885	101.924	1 : 54
<i>Inquisitor</i>	‘inquisitor’	5	510	1 : 102
<i>Israeli</i>	‘Israeli’	566	3.601	1 : 6
<i>Koordinator</i>	‘coordinator’	966	5.532	1 : 6
<i>Mitbegründer</i>	‘co-founder’	1.194	9.691	1 : 8
<i>Seismograf</i>	‘seismograph’	0	535	0 : 535
<i>Stammkunde</i>	‘regular customer’	258	3.749	1 : 15
<i>Steuermann</i>	‘helmsman’	522	7.147	1 : 14
<i>Täter</i>	‘perpetrator’	1.656	108.308	1 : 65
<i>Wahlkampfleiter</i>	‘campaign leader’	48	734	1 : 15
<i>Weltverbesserer</i>	‘world betterer’	1	1.339	1 : 1339

Table 6.20: Token frequencies of feminised and non-feminised forms of PNs that occur as masculines in the corpus in newspaper corpora.

Data which deviates from the default case of feminisation is found only in GDR newspapers between 1946 and 1990. It is dealt with in the following paragraphs.

6.3.2.2 East (GDR) As the data shows (cf. Fig. 6.23 above), neutralisation played a more prominent role in GDR newspapers than in West German news media. Yet, its effect was never as profound as in Dutch news media. Even Flemish data, for which no neutralisation policy is known, has had lower feminisation rates in the last two decades than GDR data overall. Although the tendency not to feminise PNs becomes significant in the 1960s and culminates in the 1970s, values never fall below 72.6% in ND and 78.9% in BZ. In general, thus, differentiation remains the default for the majority of PNs. After 1990, values assimilate to those of West German news media. In total, 118 masculine tokens and 52 different types occur in GDR newspapers as a PN in [*sie ist* N], equalling 17.8% of all tokens and 22.7% of all types during the time from 1946 until 1990. The percentage of masculine tokens is considerably lower in West German newspapers during the same period, at 6.9% (19 of 275 PNs) in total. The overall difference is highly significant ($\chi^2 = 18.679$, $p < .001^{***}$).

The data differs from West German data in that the lion's share of masculine PNs are not attributable to one of the prominent formal-semantic groups that are least likely to be feminised (cf. Table 6.18 above). Of 118 tokens, 93 are neither *Gast* nor a title or a rank, an anglicism, or end in *-ling*:



Table 6.21: Masculine PNs in the predicative construction [*sie ist N*] in GDR data. Token frequencies are included in parentheses, if the type is not a hapax. Types that only appear as masculines are underlined. Non-underlined types also occur as feminised tokens in the corpus.

Of 118 masculine PNs in the East German newspaper corpus, 58 are thus tokens which only occur as masculines and are never feminised (35 of 52 types). Notably, compounding with *Mann* does not pose a restriction to neutralisation, as it does in Dutch news media. *Fachmann* ‘specialist, expert.¬F’, *Kaufmann* ‘merchant, businessman.¬F’, *Obmann* ‘chairman’, *Vertrauensmann* ‘steward.¬F’ even occur as masculines only. It has been pointed out (Barz 1985; Diehl 1992; Sobotta 2000, 2002) that neutralisation of PNs with *Mann* was common in the GDR. In particular, *Kaufmann* is analysed as a form with a high degree of lexicalisation (“Idiomatisierung,” Barz 1985: 192), so that the lexical semantics of *Mann* recede into the background.

A large part of the types in the ‘Other’ category are connected with the structure and

the self-image of the GDR state. Many nouns fit the GDR profile as a workers' state. Some PNs are connected with the political structure of the state, e.g., *Agitator* 'agitator.¬F' as someone whose job it was to convey ideological ideas – mainly in line with SED policy – to the public.¹⁶³ *Marxist* 'marxist.¬F' is another example. Most PNs refer to some role or position within companies, factories, organisations: *Ausbilder* 'trainer.¬F', *Gruppenorganisator* 'group organiser.¬F', who also played a political role in the workplace or institutions, *Inspektor* 'inspector.¬F'; *Obmann* 'chairman.¬F'; *Sekretär* 'secretary.¬F' as a masculine PN is always the head of the compound *FDJ-Sekretär* (Secretary of the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* 'Free German Youth', the GDR communist youth organisation) or *Parteisekretär* 'party secretary.¬F'; *Vertrauensmann* 'steward.¬F', which is also a politically relevant noun in that it refers to a person whose role was to function as an intermediary instance between the state or the SED party and the employees of an organisation or company. Within this category, there are also nouns which refer to the name of a profession: *Ausschneider* 'cutter.¬F', *Bauzeichner* 'draftsman', *Exportbearbeiter* 'export processor.¬F', *Lotse* 'pilot, guide.¬F', *Metalloge* 'metallurgist.¬F', *Schlosser* 'locksmith.¬F'. They pertain to a professional group of mostly handwork and/or crafts and they are relevant to the GDR state insofar as the state's main industries were metallurgy, mechanical engineering, and construction industry. Here, the share of female employees was low, at around 17% (cf. Ciesla 2002 and Section 4.4.2). The fact that these nouns had only few female referents, even in the GDR, helps explain why these nouns are more easily neutralisable.

Importantly, all the nouns are also part of German vocabulary outside of the GDR state, although they played a more significant political-ideological role in the GDR. Only two types, *Ausschneider* 'cutter.¬F' and *Metalloge* 'metallurgist.¬F' do not occur at all in SP and DZ during the same period (1945-1990). *Exportbearbeiter* 'export processor.¬F' and *Gruppenorganisator* 'group organiser.¬F' both occur as only one token in SP. The main difference between East and West German newspapers concerning these types is that they appear as masculines in reference to women in GDR media only. Since they pertain to the same semantic field, a field that is of some relevance to the GDR state, their occurrences as

¹⁶³Source: https://pressegeschichte.docupedia.de/wiki/Agitator_-_Agitieren.html [Accessed 05-10-2023].

masculines is not purely coincidental. Table 6.22 below lists the types which do not occur as feminised items in GDR data, hereafter referred to as Group 1. By way of comparison, their frequencies relative to corpus size in the East and West German newspapers (1946-1990) are listed as well, so that their occurrences can be compared in the ‘Ratio’ column. The table also contains information about their first attestations in the DWDS corpora, as their age turns out to be a relevant steering factor to their neutralisation as well.

As the data in the table shows, most nouns are common in both East and West German newspaper corpora. The frequencies of only a handful of PNs in GDR corpora (*Ausschneider*, *Dispatcher*, *Exportbearbeiter*, *Gruppenorganisator*, *Metalloge*) strongly outweigh those in FRG corpora. It is, however, notable that these are PNs whose feminised versions had not yet been in use for a long time by the time they were used in reference to women in GDR newspapers. Moreover, it is no coincidence that many of these nouns are first attested during the industrialisation period. Thus, their feminised versions were infrequent by the mid-20th century and not established as common forms. In a Wilcoxon test for paired samples, it was established that the distributions of the years in which the above listed non-feminised PNs are first attested in the DWDS corpora¹⁶⁴ differ significantly from the distributions of the first attestations of their feminised counterparts in the corpora ($V = 1$, $p < .001^{***}$). Their relatively late use as feminised items points to a lack of female referents to these nouns. Most non-matrimonial compounds with *Frau*, which are formed parallel to their counterparts with *Mann* (*Obfrau* – *Obmann* ‘charwoman – chairman’), have only been attested since the 20th century. The nouns listed above thereby contrast with nouns which are exclusively feminised in GDR data (cf. Table 6.23 below). With 358 tokens (54.2% of all GDR PNs) and 160 types (75.5% of all types), this is the largest set of nouns in the East German newspaper corpus. Table 6.23 lists the 20 most frequent nouns, from here on referred to as Group 2.

¹⁶⁴They naturally may have been attested earlier elsewhere, e.g., in MHG or even OHG. Here, only attestations in the DWDS corpora (from 1465 onward) are taken into account.

GROUP 1

TYPE		f _{EAST}	f _{WEST}	RATIO	1 st At.¬F	1 st At.F
<i>Agitator</i>	‘agitator’	8.31	3.20	3.60	1490	1488
<i>Ausbilder</i>	‘trainer’	3.48	4.21	1.21	1564	1780
<i>Ausschneider</i>	‘cutter’	0.03	0.00	∞	1717	1834
<i>Bauzeichner</i>	‘draftsman’	0.40	< 0.01	4.47	1642	1847
<i>Dispatcher</i>	‘dispatcher’	2.14	0.04	54.50	1830	1876
<i>Exportbearbeiter</i>	‘export processor’	0.04	< 0.01	12.87	1706	1896
<i>Fachmann</i>	‘specialist’	9.11	11.84	1.30	1641	1898
<i>Gruppenorganisator</i>	‘group organiser’	1.43	< 0.01	436.02	1649	1900
<i>Inspektor</i>	‘inspector’	4.77	4.46	1.07	1860	1900
<i>Instrukteur</i>	‘instructor’	4.17	1.14	3.64	1848	1924
<i>Kaufmann</i>	‘merchant’	29.28	28.43	1.03	1659	1756
<i>Konstrukteur</i>	‘designer’	17.22	6.72	2.56	1846	1948
<i>Lotse</i>	‘pilot, guide’	1.67	4.02	2.40	1599	1950
<i>Marxist</i>	‘marxist’	5.40	11.89	2.20	1894	1934
<i>Metalloge</i>	‘metallurgist’	0.01	0.00	∞	1881	1960
<i>Obmann</i>	‘chairman’	0.76	1.22	1.61	1727	1900
<i>Ökonom</i>	‘economist’	13.87	9.19	1.51	1754	1847
<i>Operateur</i>	‘operator’	0.39	1.50	3.85	1727	1961
<i>Produzent</i>	‘producer’	11.37	28.82	2.54	1767	1896
<i>Schlosser</i>	‘locksmith’	23.55	5.81	4.05	1552	1731
<i>Stadtrat</i>	‘city council’	27.48	14.61	1.88	1717	1834
<i>Vertrauensmann</i>	‘steward’	5.54	3.01	1.84	1848	1924
AVG.					1724	1863
MED.					1717	1896

Table 6.22: Exclusively non-feminised types in GDR data (ND and BZ), compared to FRG data (SP and DZ). Relative frequencies (f) per million corpus tokens are listed. If the type is more frequent in GDR data, it is highlighted in gray. Ratio = highest f / lowest f. First attestations of the non-feminised types (1st At.¬F) and their feminised counterparts (1st At.F) are listed as well, including their respective average and median values.

GROUP 2

TYPE		1 st At.¬F	1 st At.F
<i>Aktivistin</i>	‘activist.F’	1915	1949
<i>Ärztin</i>	‘doctor.F’	1465	1642
<i>Buchhalterin</i>	‘bookkeeper.F’	1631	1657
<i>Direktorin</i>	‘director.F’	1609	1774
<i>Dolmetscherin</i>	‘translator.F’	1571	1645
<i>Erbin</i>	‘heiress’	1522	1603
<i>Erzieherin</i>	‘preschool teacher.F’	1641	1624
<i>Fahrerin</i>	‘driver.F’	1569	1873
<i>Genossin</i>	‘comrade.F’	1593	1768
<i>Hausfrau</i>	‘housewife’	1607	1485
<i>Kindergärtnerin</i>	‘kindergarten teacher.F’	1857	1853
<i>Köchin</i>	‘cook.F’	1490	1521
<i>Krankenschwester</i>	‘nurse’	1906	1842
<i>Mitarbeiterin</i>	‘co-worker.F’	1558	1799
<i>Sachbearbeiterin</i>	‘clerk.F’	1916	1937
<i>Schneiderin</i>	‘tailor.F’	1465	1622
<i>Schülerin</i>	‘pupil, student.F’	1490	1659
<i>Sekretärin</i>	‘secretary.F’	1658	1848
<i>Studentin</i>	‘student’	1531	1834
<i>Verkäuferin</i>	‘seller.F’	1522	1653
AVG.		1625	1729
MED.		1571	1659

Table 6.23: First attestations of PNs which are attested exclusively as feminised nouns in GDR data, as well as their non-feminised counterparts.

There are two crucial differences with Group 1. First, the first attestations of the non-feminised and feminised PNs in Group 2 are somewhat closer together ($V = 20$, $p < .01^{**}$) than those of the two samples in Group 1. This means that from the moment a non-feminised PN from Group 2 was (an attested) part of German vocabulary, it was feminised more rapidly than the items in Group 1. Some of the nouns in Group 2 are even attested before their non-feminised counterparts: *Erzieherin*, *Hausfrau*, *Kindergärtnerin*, *Krankenschwester*. Second, and more importantly, the distribution of the first attestations of feminised items in Group 2 differs significantly from the distribution of the first attestations of feminised items in Group

1 ($W = 349$, $p < .001^{***}$).¹⁶⁵ In other words, the feminised PNs in Group 2 in Table 6.23 are significantly older than the feminised PNs in Group 1 in Table 6.22.

Lastly, a small number of types and a relatively large number of tokens are alternatingly feminised or neutralised, with a tendency towards feminisation. Forms that are preferably, but not always neutralised are listed in Table 6.24 as Group 3.

GROUP 3					
TYPE		$f_{\neg F}$	f_F	1 st At. $\neg F$	1 st At. F
<i>FDJ-Sekretär·in</i>	‘FDJ secretary’	13	6	1951	1950
<i>Ingenieur·in</i>	‘engineer’	9	3	1605	1946
<i>Brigadier·in</i>	‘brigadier’	4	3	1673	1949
<i>Präsident·in</i>	‘president’	3	2	1558	1605
<i>Redakteur·in</i>	‘editor’	3	1	1787	1896
AVG.				1715	1869
MED.				1673	1946

Table 6.24: Absolute token frequencies (f) of PNs in GDR data that incline toward neutralisation. First attestations in DWDS corpora of items in their feminised and non-feminised forms are listed as well.

Since these forms are preferably neutralised, it comes as no surprise that the distributions of the first attestations of non-feminised items in Group 3 are comparable to those of Group 1 ($W = 53$, $p = 0.865$), which are always neutralised in GDR data in reference to women. Forms that are preferably, but not always feminised are listed in Table 6.25 as Group 4. With regard to their first attestations, these forms are comparable to those in Group 2, which are always feminised in GDR data. The first attestations of the masculine bases are comparable to those in Group 2, with no statistically significant difference ($W = 134$, $p = 0.134$); the first attestations of their feminised versions are comparable to those in Group 2 ($W = 130$, $p = 0.187$). All in all, only about one fifth of types, and only 8.8% of tokens are always neutralised in GDR data, which means that feminisation is the absolute default (Fig. 6.27).

¹⁶⁵Calculated in a Mann-Whitney U Test for independent samples.

GROUP 4

TYPE		$f_{\neg F}$	f_F	1 st At. $\neg F$	1 st At. F
<i>Lehrer·in</i>	‘teacher’	1	50	1472	1473
<i>Leiter·in</i>	‘leader’	9	38	1472	1673
<i>Träger·in</i>	‘carrier’	2	22	1473	1473
<i>Rentner·in</i>	‘pensioner’	1	20	1824	1838
<i>Meister·in</i>	‘craftsperson’	3	20	1470	1516
<i>Kandidat·in</i>	‘candidate’	3	10	1682	1789
<i>Vertreter·in</i>	‘representative’	1	5	1516	1689
<i>Frisör·euse</i>	‘hairdresser’	1	4	1749	1796
<i>Held·in</i>	‘hero’	1	2	1470	1516
<i>Autor·in</i>	‘author’	1	2	1516	1700
AVG.				1564	1646
MED.				1473	1673

Table 6.25: Absolute token frequencies (f) of PNs in GDR data that incline toward feminisation. First attestations in DWDS corpora of items in their feminised and non-feminised forms are listed as well.

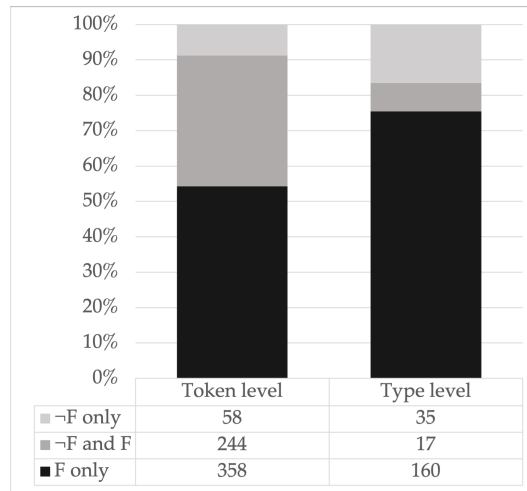


Figure 6.27: Types and tokens in GDR data: proportion of neutralised ($\neg F$) and feminised (F) items.

6.3.3 Conclusion: feminisation in German news media

Concerning their age and thus their position in the system, nouns that are (preferably) feminised significantly differ from nouns that are (preferably) not feminised in GDR data.

Group 1 consists of generally older forms, both as masculines and as feminised items. These nouns had had more time to be established as feminised PNs by the time the GDR was founded. Due to the political and economic structure of the GDR, newspapers made use of nouns that were not yet established as feminised PNs in reference to women. This was not the case in the FRG, where such nouns were nearly exclusively used in reference to men. This explains why certain PNs in GDR data are never feminised, and why other, well established forms are always feminised, even in the predicative position. Contrary to widely accepted views on language use in the GDR, neutralisation did not just affect every form. Like in the FRG, the default form of a PN with a female referent is feminised. Neutralisation policies reflected in newspapers are more readily applied in the practice of writing news articles when the corresponding forms are not yet established through frequent use. Many PNs that are (nearly) always feminised denote occupations which are traditionally associated with women. This association was true of the GDR as well, in spite of the fact that more than 90% of women were also employed outside of the home. Not only were women required to carry out household and motherly tasks (cf. Section 4.4.2), outside of the house they were also overrepresented in care and healthcare, education, the textile industry, and cleaning, which is reflected in the feminisation of, e.g., *Kindergärtnerin* ‘kindergarten teacher.F’, *Erzieherin* ‘preschool teacher.F’, *Friseurin* ‘hairdresser.F’, *Lehrerin* ‘teacher.F’, *Köchin* ‘cook.F’, *Schneiderin* ‘tailor.F’, and *Krankenschwester* ‘nurse’. That such forms mainly have female referents can be inferred from their first attestations, sometimes even before their non-feminised counterparts were attested.

On a last note, with respect to the morphological characteristics of feminised PNs, their appearance in German news media is very homogeneous. Only 86 tokens are not feminised by *-in*, which means that 98.0% of feminised PNs follow the pattern *-in*. Of those 86 tokens, 64 (74.4%) are compounds with *Frau*, ten (11.6%) end in *-euse* (*Friseurin* ‘hairdresser.F’ and *Souffleuse* ‘prompter.F’), and twelve have another form: *Stewardess* ‘stewardess’, *Diakonisse* ‘deaconess’, *Muslima* ‘muslim woman’, and *Witwe* ‘widow’. The latter is the only noun that diachronically and morphologically precedes its “masculinised” counterpart *Witwer*

‘widower’.

6.4 Summary

The case study in this chapter was concerned with feminisation in non-referential, predicative contexts in Dutch and German, diachronically as well as synchronically. Data from news media sources were investigated, and PNs with female referents were searched and analysed. In total, the data consists of 11.242 tokens, of which 5.990 (53.3%) are of Dutch origin, 899 (8.0%) are Flemish, and 4.353 (38.7%) are German. Feminisation has significantly decreased over time, especially since the 1980s, in Dutch and Flemish media, although the difference between Dutch and Flemish use of feminising morphology remains significant. Flemish news sources make use of feminisation significantly more than Dutch news sources, and one pattern in particular, the suffix *-e*, is productive in Flemish data. The effect of neutralisation guidelines is clearly visible in Dutch data, and after 2016 only a few domains of PNs remain feminised, notably PNs with a high lexicalisation degree and with semantics that emphasise the relevance of social gender (most prominently in sports names and inhabitant names).

In spite of the fact that neutralisation in the GDR is often named as a well-known process, this only becomes visible in a number of PNs that are never feminised. While GDR news sources make use of feminising morphology significantly less often than FRG sources between ca. 1970 and 1990, neutralisation in the GDR does not usually occur when the noun is an older and well-established feminised PNs. Prominent feminisation is evident in examples in which feminised PNs have been used for centuries, which in turn indicates that female referents to such nouns have existed for centuries as well. Moreover, these are the domains in which GDR women were well represented as well (e.g., (health)care, education). Nouns which only rarely and, crucially, only recently have had female referents are neutralised. That such nouns occur more often in GDR data in reference to women is due to the fact that not only were these domains relevant to the GDR economy, they were also domains in which women were employed, contrary to female inhabitants of the FRG. Hence, nouns such as *Lotse* ‘pilot, guide.¬F’, *Metalloge* ‘metallurgist.¬F’, and *Schlosser* ‘locksmith¬F’ denote

relevant occupations in the GDR (they more frequent occurrences in GDR data than in FRG bear witness to this), but had not been used in reference to women before. Therefore, they are more easily neutralised than nouns such as *Lehrerin* ‘teacher.F’ or *Kindergärtnerin* ‘kindergarten teacher.F’, which have had female referents for centuries. In sum, feminisation has been the default in German (even long before the 20th century, cf. Kopf 2023), and this is not influenced by non-referential contexts. In the following chapter, one more case study will specifically focus on how far feminisation in German stretches, and how diachronic developments relate to the status quo, because feminisation also occurs in non-referential contexts outside of the animate domain.

7 Feminisation in inanimate contexts

In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that feminisation in German is the default in virtually every context in which the referent is female and human. Significant deviations from this default are found only in GDR newspapers, and even then, long established feminised PNs are not neutralised. This final chapter is dedicated to a special case of sex-marking, namely in contexts in which the referent is inanimate, in order to explore the limits of feminisation. At least in German, feminised PNs can have an inanimate referent that is denoted by a grammatically feminine noun. In other words, there is some sort of agreement pattern between a feminine controller and its feminised target.¹⁶⁶ In examples such as the one in (82), the controller is a collective noun, and therefore closely linked with the human domain, because it is a collective of human referents. Feminisation in these contexts is thus metonymically motivated (cf. Szczepaniak 2013, 2014). Other examples are clear instances of personification of otherwise abstract concepts, such as the example in (83). Lastly, examples such as (84) are rare. Szczepaniak (2013: 233) notes that the bounded object *Rakete* ‘rocket’ in (84) is not personified, because the target is non-agentive.

- (82) Die **Lega Nord**, der Castelli angehört, bietet sich immer
The.FEM Lega.FEM Nord.FEM to.which Castelli belongs presents itself everytime
wieder als **Wahrerin** der Interessen des Volkes an.
again as defender.F of.the interests of.the people to
‘The Lega Nord, to which Castelli belongs, presents itself time and time again as
defender of the people’s interests.’

(*nzz* 15 August, 2006, in Scott 2009b: 58)

- (83) die **Vernunft** ist die ärgste **Tyrannin**
the.FEM reason.FEM is the wickedest tyrant.F
‘Reason is the wickedest tyrant.’

(Citation from Goethe, in Scott 2009b: 63)

¹⁶⁶Recall Corbett’s (2006: 4) definition of a controller as “the element which determines the agreement” and the target as “the element whose form is determined by agreement”.

- (84) Die **Rakete** sollte eine Nutzlast von 6,8 Tonnen in den Weltraum
 The.FEM rocket.FEM should a payload of 6,8 tons in the space
 befördern können – gut zwei Tonnen mehr als ihre **Vorgängerin**.
 carry can – good two tons more than her predecessor.F
 ‘The rocket should be able to carry a payload of 6,8 tons into space – more than two
 tons more than its predecessor.’

(*Mannheimer Morgen* 05 June, 1996, in Szczepaniak 2013: 222)

Instances such as (84) have been analysed (Wellmann 1975: 108; Müller 1993: 340) as the final step in a grammaticalisation process “where reference is made only to feminine gender and not to female sex” (Scott 2009b: 77). This kind of gender marking fits Booij’s (1993) description of contextual inflection, which only serves syntactic agreement. Only in this last phase is the agreement pattern formally motivated in the analysis. In the previous phases (I: human referents, II: personification, III: collective referents), the occurrence of *-in* on the target is semantically motivated (Scott 2009b: 77; Szczepaniak 2014: 207-208). Nonetheless, Szczepaniak (2013: 233) concludes that this grammaticalisation process is a dead-end street, because targets for non-personified concrete controllers can only be non-agentive. Thus, the set of possible PN targets for inanimate, non-personified controllers is much smaller than that of PNs denoting human beings (which can be any PN). Personification, as in (83), is a well known stylistic figure, popular especially in medieval literature. It is a manifestation of the *thinking-for-speaking* effect (Slobin 1987, 1996) in languages with a sex-based gender system. Already Brugmann has pointed to the effect of grammatical gender on the cognitive representation of concepts and objects as human beings. He names numerous examples from Indoeuropean languages that confirm the the gender-sex match, such as the German example *die Elektrizität* ‘the electricity.FEM’, which he says is regularly represented as female (Brugmann 1897: 16-20). This cognitive effect has been tested by Segel & Boroditsky (2011), who investigated art works from Italy, France, Germany, and Spain (all related to sex-based gender systems) in which a personified concept is depicted, starting in 1200 AD. They find that the depicted gender significantly coincides with the grammatical gender of the personified concept (Segel & Boroditsky 2011: 2). As such, it is not expected that

such linguistic examples will often be found in contemporary (Standard) Dutch, because the feminine gender is no longer differentially marked. Scott (2009a,b) observes that there are instances of feminisation for targets of inanimate controllers in Dutch, of which some are overtly marked as (historically) feminine, e.g., by the suffix *-ing* in (85), or not (86):

- (85) De **stichting** is **eigenares** en **beheerster** van een tiental
 The.UTR foundation.UTR is owner.F and administrator.F of a ten
 studentenhuizen en studiecentra in enkele steden van het land.
 student.houses and study.centres in some towns of the country
 ‘The foundation is the owner and the administrator of ten student houses and study
 centres in some towns in the country.’
- (86) De **kerk** is **behoedster** en **verkondigster** van de waarheid die
 The.UT church.UTR is guardian.F and proclaimer.F of the truth that
 God in Jezus Christus aan de wereld meegedeeld heeft.
 God in Jesus Christ to the world told has
 ‘The church is the guardian and proclaimer of the truth that God, in Jesus Christ,
 told the world.’

(Examples from Scott 2009b: 73)

Such examples are explained mainly as remnants of older use in Dutch (Scott 2009b: 75). Audring (2009: 48) points to the historical use of the feminine pronoun *haar* in anaphoric reference to collectives that do not necessarily need to be feminine (e.g., *het Nederlandse volk* ‘the Dutch people’ > *haar* ‘her’). In MD, the pronoun *haar* was still a plural pronoun (‘their’), which may explain its use in collective contexts, since plural pronouns are most commonly used in these environments. Later, *haar* possibly remained in these contexts, where it was reanalysed as a singular feminine marker. This, in combination with the fact that many collectives are historically feminine in Germanic (cf. Section 3.1), may give way to “hypercorrection” (Audring 2009: 47).

Previous studies have taken the 20th century into focus, and Szczepaniak (2014) concludes:

Bereits zu Beginn des 20. Jhs. ist ein funktionaler Wandel der *in*-Bildungen zu beobachten, die sich bei nicht-referentieller Verwendung auf Wörter beziehen, deren Referenten keinen natürlichen Sexus aufweisen.¹⁶⁷

(Szczepaniak 2014: 215)

This case study will follow up on these findings and trace developments in the centuries after MD and MHG until the year 2021. Of particular interest in this study are the developments in German, complementary to the developments in Dutch described in the previous chapter. While it was demonstrated that in Standard Dutch feminisation is in a process of decline, this study focuses on the process of expansion of German feminisation. The main research question is thus which developments can be traced and how they relate to the theory introduced in the first chapters, and what these developments can tell us about the status and the possibilities of feminisation in contemporary German.

7.1 Corpus and data collection

To remain within the context of news media, contemporary data for this corpus study was collected from the JSI Timestamped corpora from the SketchEngine, which collects news articles from RSS-enabled websites. Instead of direct newspaper sources, like in Chapter 6, these corpora were used because they are both highly manageable (both the German and the Dutch corpus) and because they are compiled as parallel corpora. German data stems from the 2021-03 and 2021-04 subcorpora, which contain data scraped from web crawling in March and April, 2021. Hinting at the scarcity of Dutch data, the parallel 2021-03 and 2021-04 Dutch corpora did not yield any data conforming to the search query. The search was first widened to the 2014-2021 Dutch JSI corpus, and then – again due to the scarcity of data – to the more general nlTenTen14 corpus. This corpus contains texts covering a range of different subjects, all containing data from the web. The spread of text subjects in the corpus is displayed in Fig. 7.1.

¹⁶⁷“At the beginning of the 20th century a functional change in *in*-formations can already be observed. In non-referential use, they relate to words, whose referents do not have a biological sex.” [N.V.]

Topic classification of the classified part of the Dutch Web 2020 corpus

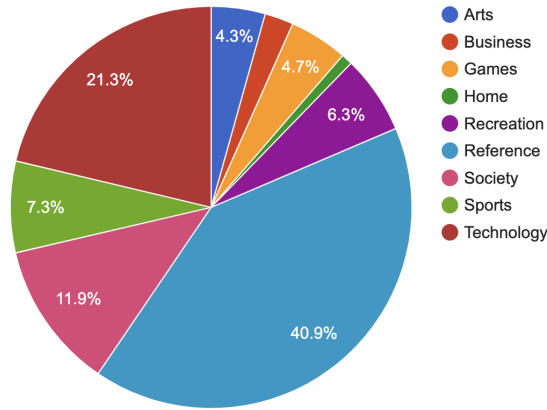


Figure 7.1: Texts in the nlTenTen14 corpus. Data available via <https://www.sketchengine.eu/nltenten-dutch-corpus/> [Accessed 05-11-2023].

The Dutch corpus is 17 times larger than the German corpus, which was necessary to find any Dutch data for the analysis, although it is known that such data exists (cf. Scott 2009a,b). An overview of the sizes of the different Dutch and German contemporary corpora is given in Table 7.1.

GERMAN CORPUS	TOKENS
Timestamped JSI web corpus 2021-03	126.775.824
Timestamped JSI web corpus 2021-04	89.579.085
	216.354.909
DUTCH CORPUS	TOKENS
Timestamped JSI web corpus 2021-03	31.428.324
Timestamped JSI web corpus 2021-04	23.580.058
Timestamped JSI web corpus 2014-2021	1.380.833.141
Dutch Web 2014 (nlTenTen14)	2.253.777.579
	3.699.619.102

Table 7.1: Dutch and German SketchEngine corpora.

Previous analyses of feminisation in inanimate contexts in German started in the 20th century. This study widens that scope contrastively and traces developments in NHG, starting in 1650, and MoD, starting in 1550.¹⁶⁸ For German, data between 1650 and 1899 from the

¹⁶⁸The transition from MD to MoD is sometimes also set at around 1500, but since the *Corpus Middelned-*

DTA-Kernkorpus was used, which can be searched through the DWDS database. This “core corpus” of the *Deutsches Textarchiv* contains both fiction and non-fiction texts, with their distributions listed below:¹⁶⁹

- Fiction (*Belletristik*): 25.6%
- Functional literature (*Gebrauchsliteratur*): 19.6%
- Scientific literature (*Wissenschaft*): 54.8%

For 20th-century data, the DWDS-Kernkorpus was used, which also contains fiction and non-fiction texts:

- Fiction (*Belletristik*): 26.4%
- Functional literature (*Gebrauchsliteratur*): 21.8%
- Scientific literature (*Wissenschaft*): 24.6%
- Newspaper (*Zeitung*): 27.3%

Since Dutch historical corpora after the MD period are not readily available, they had to be compiled using texts from the DBNL (*Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren* ‘Digital Library for Dutch Literature’). The DBNL stores Dutch texts from the early medieval period until the 21st century, many of which are digitised. The database provides a list with available texts and their metadata. Starting in 1700, 20 fiction (prose) texts and 20 non-fiction texts (which are labeled as such in the DBNL database) per century were randomly selected by computer. For the period 1550-1700, there are a total 125 of such prose and non-fiction texts available, and these were all used for the corpus study. An overview of the different historical corpora and their token counts can be found in Table 7.2.

erlands contains texts until 1550, this occasion-compiled corpus contains texts starting in 1550.

¹⁶⁹Statistics of the DTA-Kernkorpus can be found via <https://www.dwds.de/r/stat/?corpus=kern> [Accessed 02-11-2023].

GERMAN CORPUS	PERIOD	TOKENS
DTA-Kern	1650-1899	142.078.758
DWDS-Kern	1900-1999	121.494.429
		263.573.187
DUTCH CORPUS	PERIOD	TOKENS
DBNL texts	1550-1699	9.201.820
id.	1700-1799	4.735.925
id.	1800-1899	7.768.526
id.	1900-1999	3.786.623
		25.492.894

Table 7.2: Dutch and German historical corpora.

Hence, in this case the German corpus is about ten times larger than the Dutch corpus, but this is related to the restricted accessibility of Dutch data. The 245 compiled texts thus contain about 25.5 million tokens. The compilation was carried out through the corpus compilation function of the SketchEngine, which also has an automatic annotation function.

To search for contexts in which a feminised PN is the target of a grammatically feminine controller, the search in the DWDS corpora was restricted to any occurrence of a feminine antecedent with a definite article (feminine gender is marked adnominally on the article) with up to five elements before the feminised PN, restricted to PNs ending in *-erin*, i.e., the suffix *-er* with an added *-in*. The search query was “\$w=@die #5 *erin with \$p=@NN”. In the Dutch historical corpus, any occurrence of a noun ending in *-ster* (the equivalent to *-erin*) was searched for, and these nouns were subsequently checked to have a human or nonhuman referent. Hence, both in Dutch and German, the search was restricted to PNs ending either in *-erin* or in *-ster*, the most productive feminisation patterns for both languages (cf. Chapter 5). In terms of PN formation through derivational patterns, *-er* is the most common pattern as well: Stricker (2000) finds that 67.2% of derived PNs are formed through *-er*. The restriction to the feminisation of PNs ending in *-er* thus still captures a vast population of available PNs. Contemporary data was restricted to one narrower construction in German, because the SketchEngine corpora otherwise yield an unmanageable amount of hits. To ensure comparability of the data, the same was done for Dutch. This construction

was [*die* N_{FEM} *als* N-*erin*_{FEM}] for German and thus [*de* N_{FEM} *als* N-*ster*_{FEM}] for Dutch (e.g., *die Kirche als Hüterin* / *de Kerk als hoedster* ‘the Church as a guardian.F’). The construction is thus an appositional one, with the feminised PN directly following *als*. In this case, the Dutch antecedent in the construction is also marked as grammatically feminine, because it was ensured that the noun was historically feminine, before it shifted to the *utrum* class. Historically feminine nouns, and feminine nouns which are to date perceived as feminine in Southern Dutch varieties, are still marked as such in dictionaries. The leading Dutch dictionary, *Van Dale*, served as an orientation device for the feminine gender of antecedents in the above construction.

Due to these specific research conditions, in which only PNs formed by the suffix *-er* are searched for as feminised units, contexts such as the one containing *Tyrannin* ‘tyrant.F’ in 83 are excluded from the case study. It has been shown that the German suffix *-in* originated as a feminiser of *er*-nominals (Szczepaniak 2013: 227). While OHG *āri*-nominals were agentive nouns, *-er* has since expanded its semantic scope. It did not only metaphorically and metonymically expand onto [-human] nouns (cf. Panther & Thornburg 2003), but as a [+human] noun it also went far beyond the agentive domain. Panther & Thornburg (2001) demonstrate the occurrence of [+human] *er*-nominals in English in six different domains, five of which are deviant from the central sense of a human being performing an action (Panther & Thornburg 2001: 156-168). These include nouns such as *left-hander* (German *Linkshänder*), *baby-boomer* (Dutch and German *babyboomer* resp. *Babyboomer*), *loser* (Dutch and German *verliezer* resp. *Verlierer*), etc. Hence, the exclusion of non-feminised PNs other than *er*-nominals does not entail a limitation to agentive contexts. Whereas indeed certain occupational or status nouns are excluded (*Tyrannin* is one example), they are also included in the investigated *er*-nominals, vouching for a broad semantic spectrum of feminisable PNs.

7.2 Results

This study is mainly concerned with the inanimate antecedents (controllers) of feminised nouns, because its purpose is to disclose in which inanimate contexts feminisation can occur.

The Individuation Hierarchy as an elaboration of the Animacy Hierarchy is thus helpful, since the inanimate controllers of feminised PNs found in the data are categorised according to it. The Hierarchy that Audring (2006, 2009) proposes was previously introduced in Section 2.3.1. A few details relevant to the data in this case study are added here. First, as collective nouns have been found to be a major category of controllers in the 20th century, they are added to the Hierarchy, and because they are a collective of human beings, they are placed directly next to them. Second, the category UNSPECIFIC MASS does not play a role here, because it does not occur in the data. Each referent is specific, the noun preceded by the definite article *die* or *de*, and mass nouns are generally rare controllers, as will be shown below. This leads to the following adaptation of the Individuation Hierarchy:

(87) HUMAN > HUMAN COLLECTIVE > OTHER ANIMATE > BOUNDED OBJECT/ABSTRACT
 > SPECIFIC MASS > ~~UNSPECIFIC MASS~~/UNBOUNDED ABSTRACT

Fig. 7.2 displays the distribution of different controllers over German data by period. Two categories stand out, namely collectives and unbounded abstracts. The ambiguous category refers to instances that are ambiguous between these two (for a discussion, cf. Section 7.3.1).

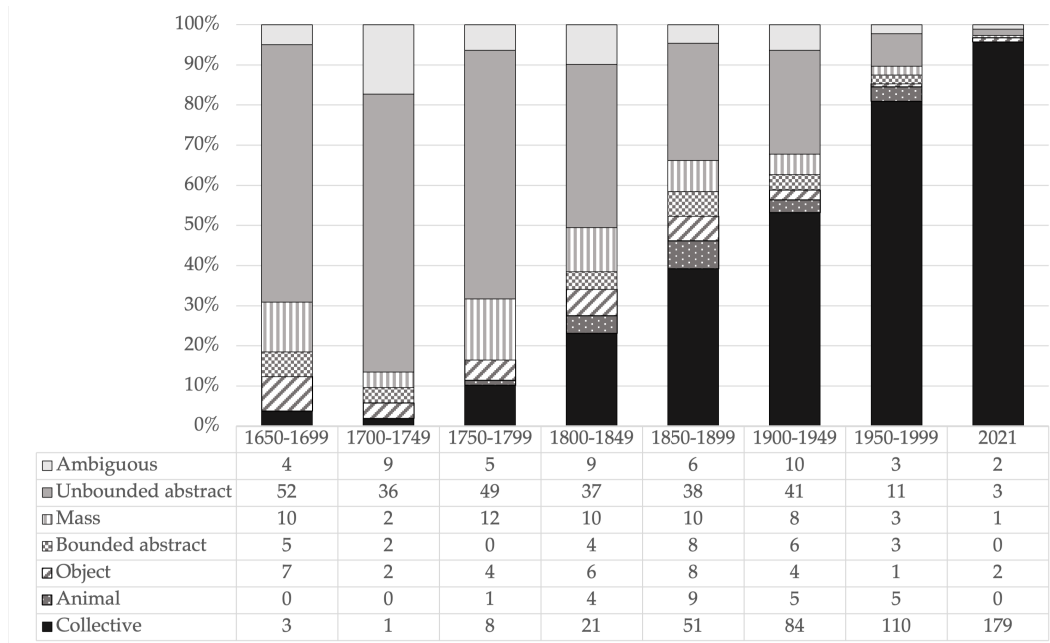


Figure 7.2: Distribution of inanimate controllers to feminised PNs in German diachronic data. Absolute values per category on the Individuation Hierarchy are included. Semantically ambiguous controllers are ambiguous between unbounded abstract and collective.

The data demonstrates that there is a gradual switch from predominantly unbounded abstract controllers, reminiscent of example (83), to predominantly collective nouns as controllers, reminiscent of example (82), in the data. Collective nouns have been a majority feature since the early 20th century, and have already been on the rise since the 18th century. There is thus in fact a gradual pattern switch in the data, but this does not explain whether the switch is due to a decreasing relative number of abstract controllers, or to an increasing relative number of collective controllers. Relative token frequencies (i.e., relative to corpus size) offer more insight. As shown in Fig. 7.3, the number of abstract controllers gradually decreases, starting in the second half of the 19th century. Contemporary data is not included in the figure below, because it stems from a different corpus. The increase of collective controllers had already started somewhat earlier, between 1750 and 1800. This, at first, leads to a situation in which the number of abstract and other inanimate controllers remains relatively stable (periods 1750-1799 and 1800-1949), after which they gradually decrease. As will be discussed below, controllers that are ambiguous between abstracts and collectives do

point to a relation between the two. However, both patterns can exist simultaneously and the rise of one does not necessarily imply the fall of the other.

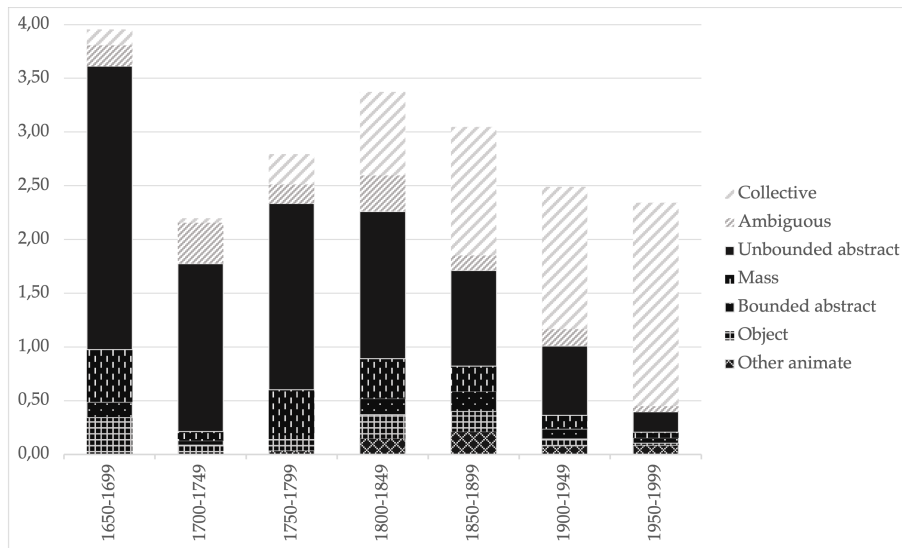


Figure 7.3: Token frequencies of inanimate antecedents to feminised PNs, relative to corpus size, in German diachronic data. Because the data from the 21st century stems from a different corpus, it is not included in the graph.

The variable text genre is relevant to the development toward collective controllers as the default pattern. The DWDS Kernkorpus, from which the German historical data stems, consists of one fourth of fiction data, as described above. However, virtually all collective antecedents are found in non-fiction texts (Fig. 7.4), whereas fiction texts nearly exclusively contain abstracts and other inanimate nouns as antecedents to feminised PNs (Fig. 7.5). Here it can be seen that the use of non-collective inanimate controllers decreases over time, even when the rise of collective nouns is not relevant, as in fiction texts. It is also remarkable that the ambiguous contexts, which may serve as bridging contexts between constructions with abstract, object, or mass antecedents and constructions with collective controllers, are only found in non-fiction texts.

After the 17th century, the relative number of abstract/object/mass controllers decreases in the fiction corpus, with a resurgence in the first half of the 19th century. Based on the spread of text types in the Kernkorpus, it is in theory expected that one fourth of tokens per semantic category are found in fiction texts, because they make up 25.6% of texts in

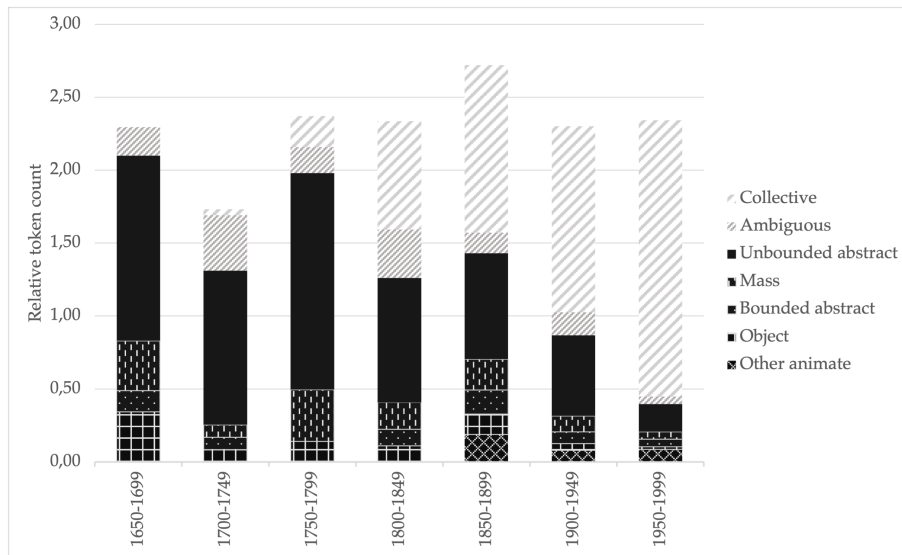


Figure 7.4: Token frequencies of inanimate antecedents to feminised PNs, relative to corpus size, in non-fiction texts in German diachronic data.

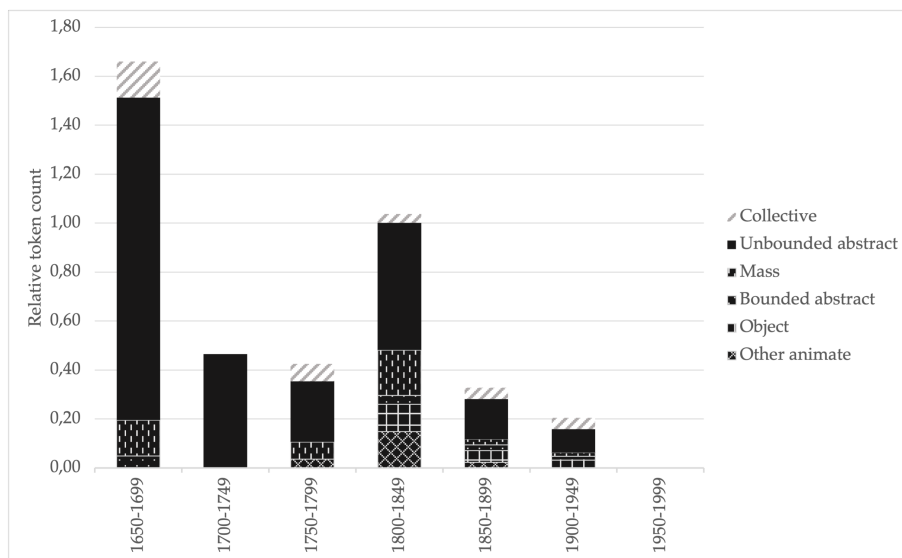


Figure 7.5: Token frequencies of inanimate antecedents to feminised PNs, relative to corpus size, in fiction texts in German diachronic data.

the Kernkorpus from 1650-1899, and 26.4% of texts in the Kernkorpus from 1900-1999. Nonetheless, when such antecedents gain ground in the 19th century, they occur in the fiction subcorpus significantly less often than expected. Observed frequencies of collective controllers in the fiction corpus, next to their respective expected frequencies, based on the size of the fiction corpus, are displayed in Table 7.3, as well as the results of their respective chi-square tests by period. These demonstrate that from roughly 1850 onwards, the observed number of collective controllers to feminised PNs is significantly lower than expected in fiction texts.

PERIOD	f _{SUM}	f _{OBS}	f _{EXP}	χ^2	p
1650-1699	3	3	1	0.75	0.387
1700-1749	1	0	0	0	1
1750-1799	5	2	1	0	1
1800-1849	18	1	5	1.8	0.179
1850-1899	48	2	12	6.77	< .01**
1900-1949	79	3	20	13.027	< .001***
1950-1999	107	1	28	27.268	< .001***

Table 7.3: Observed (f_{OBS}) and expected (f_{EXP}) absolute values of collective antecedents in fiction texts in German historical data. ‘f_{SUM}’ lists the sum of all observed collective nouns as antecedents in fiction and non-fiction texts. Observed and expected frequencies relate to fiction texts only.

Thus, the rise of collective controllers in the 18th century is related to non-fiction texts. Abstract, object, and mass controllers, on the other hand, are mostly evenly spread over text genres, with a significant overrepresentation in fiction texts in the period 1800-1849 ($\chi^2 = 4.238$, $p < .05^*$), which is also displayed in Fig. 7.5. This will be further discussed below.

Because of data scarcity for Dutch, whole centuries were investigated as one period of time, instead of half centuries. Results are shown in Fig. 7.6, parallel to the German results.

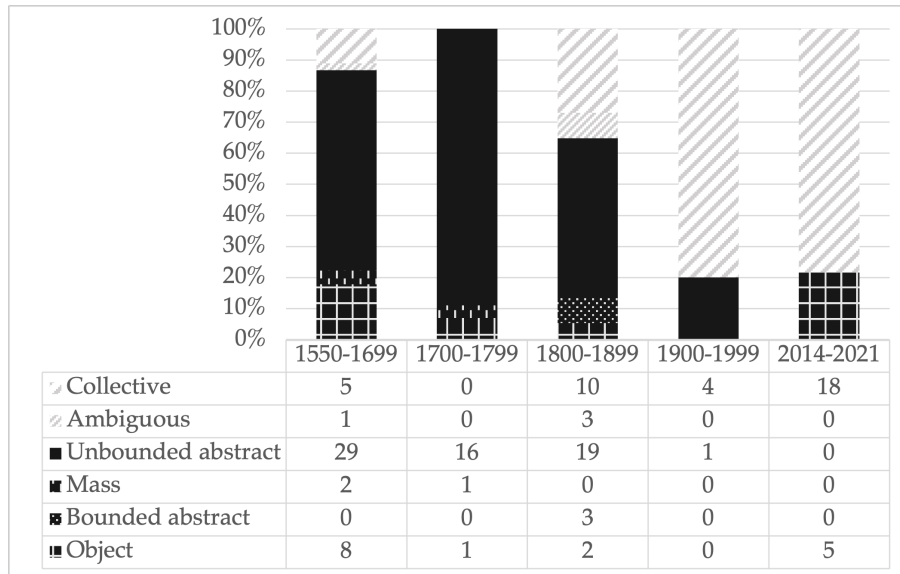


Figure 7.6: Distribution of inanimate controllers to feminised PNs in Dutch diachronic data. Absolute values per category on the Individuation Hierarchy are included. Semantically ambiguous controllers are ambiguous between unbounded abstract and collective.

Notwithstanding a low number of constructions (105) found throughout the centuries, indebted to a lack of manageable corpora and possibly a lack of occurrences, Dutch data does show that collective controllers gain ground in the 19th century as well. Only five constructions are found here, of which four have a collective controller. In Dutch, too, a text type preference can be discerned. While the rise of collective antecedents takes place in non-fiction texts (Fig. 7.7), fiction texts contain only abstract, object, and mass noun as controllers (Fig. 7.8). One of four collective controllers in the 20th century is found in a text labeled as fiction. As opposed to German, it appears that the relative number of constructions per corpus size decreases in the 20th century.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰For Dutch data based on DBNL texts, caution is advised concerning corpus size: the Dutch self-compiled corpus does not contain a lower relative number of feminised PNs to inanimate antecedents than the German corpus in the same period (until 1999), even though a lower number would be expected. This may be linked with the artificial preservation of the masculine/feminine gender distinction until the late 19th century, but also with the fact that higher relative numbers are associated with smaller corpora. Moreover, the investigated patterns are not completely equal, which is why relative token frequencies in Dutch and German historical material are not directly comparable.

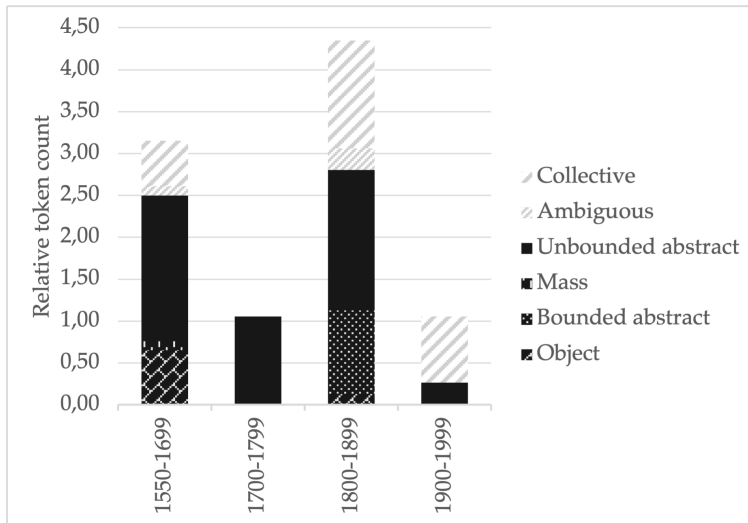


Figure 7.7: Token frequencies of inanimate antecedents to feminised PNs, relative to corpus size, in non-fiction texts in Dutch diachronic data.

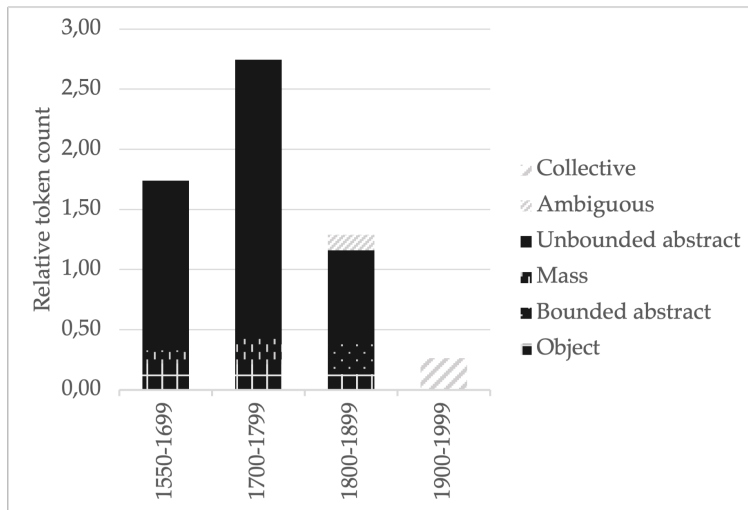


Figure 7.8: Token frequencies of inanimate antecedents to feminised PNs, relative to corpus size, in fiction texts in Dutch diachronic data.

7.3 Discussion

7.3.1 Historical data

It can be deduced from the German historical data that there was a transition period in which certain nouns occurred in contexts in which their interpretations are ambiguous. It is not inconceivable that collectives such as the church were initially used and interpreted in a more conceptual and abstract way, and that they subsequently experienced a semantic shift towards a more concrete and personified, i.e., collective, reading. Compare, for instance, the usage difference between *Kirche* ‘Church’ in (88) and in (89).

- (88) es seye die Römische kirche die einige wahre **kirche** / und also die
it is the Roman church the only true church / and therefore the
meisterin des glaubens.
master.F of.the faith

‘The Roman Church is the only true church, and it is therefore the ruler of faith.’

(Spener 1700: 96 [SPENER], functional literature)

- (89) Damit ist die **Kirche** nicht nur zur **Hüterin** der Heiligen Schrift
Thereby is the Church not only as.the guardian.F of.the Holy Scripture
bestimmt, sie ist auch ihr authentischer Interpret.
destined she is also its authentic interpreter.¬F

‘The Church is thereby not only destined to be the guardian of the Holy Scripture, it is also its authentic interpreter.’

(von Baus 1962: 815 [BAUS], scientific literature)

In (88), the noun *kirche* refers to the Catholic faith, called the true faith (*die wahre kirche*) in the sentence, more so than to its representatives. By contrast, in (89), the interpretation of Holy Scripture is by definition a human task, which adds these semantics, and therefore a collective reading, to the noun *Kirche*. Note that the PN *interpret* ‘interpreter.¬F’ is not feminised anymore. Scientific and philosophical disciplines are typical antecedents to feminised nouns in older texts; concepts such as philosophy, medicine, and even printing are often used as such:

- (90) Man mag derhalben wol schliessen / daß die **Philosophie** sey eine
 One may therefore MOD conclude / that the philosophy.FEM is a
Handleiterin und **Vorbereiterin** zur Theosophie.
 guide.F and preparer.F to.the theosophy
 ‘One may therefore conclude that philosophy is a guide and a preparer for theosophy.’

(Becher 1683: Vorrede [BECHER], scientific literature)

- (91) Medicina, die **Artzney-Kunst**, ist eine **Dienerin** der Natur, welche trachtet,
 Medicina, the art.of.medicine.FEM is a servant.F of.the nature which attempts
 die verlohrene Gesundheit der Menschen durch tüchtige Mittel wieder zu
 the lost health of.the people through capable resources again to
 erlangen.
 obtain
 ‘Medicina, the art of medicine, is a servant of nature, which attempts at regaining
 the lost health of people through the right resources.’

(Woyt 1737: 558 [WOYT], scientific literature)

- (92) Daß die **Buchdruckerkunst** eine **Vorläuferin** gescheiderer und besserer Zeiten,
 That the art.of.printing.FEM a predecessor.F of.cleverer and better times
 und eine **Beförderin** der Reformation gewesen wurde hernach dargethan.
 and a carrier.F of.the Reformation has.been was afterwards demonstrated
 ‘That the art of printing was a predecessor of cleverer and better times and a carrier
 of the Reformation, was afterwards demonstrated.’

(Gessner 1741: 153 [GESSNER], scientific literature)

Although these concepts and their use in the above examples are logically only carried out by human beings, in the rhetorical style of the sources in which they appear, the concept names rather than their respective PNs (*Philosophen* ‘philosophers’, *Ärzte* ‘doctors’, *Buckdrucker* ‘printers’) are used. This is perhaps due to the normative rather than descriptive nature of these sentences: in (91), for instance, the normative requirement of medicine (i.e., medical practitioners) is to make people healthy again, irrespective of the individual intentions of individual doctors. Such examples fall into the ambiguous category in the data introduced in the previous section, because while a collective reading is implied, the abstract conceptual interpretation seems to be foregrounded. A further instance of a presumed semantic change is

found in (93), where the revolution is a personified concept, although the secondary semantics of human beings as the carriers of the revolution are implied.

- (93) Wollt ihr aber bey ihr zur Schule gehen, dann nehmt die **Revolution**
Want you however with her to.the school go then take the revolution.FEM
zur **Lehrerin**; vieler trägen Jahrhunderte Gang hat in ihr zum Kreislauf
as.the teacher.F of.many slow centuries course has in her to.the cycle
von Jahren sich beschleunigt.
of years itself accelerated
'If you want to educate yourself there, then take the revolution as your teacher; the
course of many slow centuries has sped up itself to a cycle of only years through it.'

(von Görres 1819: 89 [GÖRRES], functional literature)

While allegorical personification of concepts and objects can exist independently of collectives, ambiguous contexts in the former have likely contributed to the emergence of the latter. Concepts such as *Kirche* increasingly migrate toward a use as collectives, emphasising the authority of the people behind it rather than the abstract CHURCH IS FAITH interpretation. Simultaneously, in the 19th century, collective nouns in the political, military, and bureaucratic domains emerge as antecedents: *Liga* 'league', *Societät* 'society', *Gemeinde* 'municipality', *Staatsaufsicht* 'state authority', *Secte* 'sect', *Gesellschaft* 'society', *Compagnie* 'company'. They join the ranks of the only collective nouns which occur in the data before the 19th century, namely *Stadt* 'city', *Nation* 'nation', *Republik* 'republic', *Kirche* 'Church' (if it is interpreted as a collective), and *Policey* 'police' (the first attestation of a collective, from 1686). In the case of cities and countries, as well, they are at first intended as the personified concept of a city or even directly linked with a person or a deity, and their semantics shift toward a collective interpretation as 'the city's authorities' or 'the people that live in the city' (94).

(94) die Wolthaten der **Stadt** Carthago gegen seinem Vater hätten ihn
 the good.deeds of.the city.FEM Carthage against his father would.have him
 zeither zurücke gehalten den Degen zu zucken / wider die **Stadt** / welche die
 since back held the sword to lift.up / against the city.FEM / which the
Beherrscherin seiner Seele zum Vaterlande / sein Vater aber zu seiner
 dominator.F of.his soul to.the fatherland / his father however to his
 ersten **Aufnehmerin** gehabt
 first recipient.F had

‘The good deeds of the city of Carthage would have held him back ever since against taking up the sword against the city, which was the dominator of his soul toward his fatherland, although it was the first adopter of his father.’

(von Lohenstein 1689: 805 [LOHENSTEIN], fiction)

At the same time, in the 19th century, there is a short resurgence of abstract and object controllers in fiction data, after becoming rare in the 18th century. The first decrease in the 18th century is likely linked with the end of the “great efflorescence [...] of personification allegory in European literature” (Bloomfield 1963: 163) after 1700. A resurgence in the first half of the 19th century must be attributed to authors’ stylistic preferences, because there is no further recognisable reason why literary texts in that period contain significantly more allegorical personifications, relative to corpus size.

As other authors have noted for contemporary and 20th century German material, object controllers are rare in comparison with concept or collective controllers. Occurrences of feminised targets of concrete objects that are non-agentive found by Scott (2009b) and Szczepaniak (2013) are rare: *Schneeflocke* → *Vorgängerin* ‘snowflake → predecessor.F’, *Grammatik* → *Nachfolgerin* ‘grammar → successor.F’, *PlayStation* → *Vorgängerin* ‘PlayStation → predecessor.F’ (Scott 2009b: 39, 61), *Rakete* → *Vorgängerin* ‘rocket → predecessor.F’, *Mauer* → *Garantin* ‘wall → guarantor.F’ (Szczepaniak 2013: 222). Based on such examples, Scott (2009b) assumes a diachronic development of German *-in* from personification semantics to grammar. While Scott (2009b: 78, 82-83) interprets non-personified object controllers as a last step in the grammaticalisation process of *-in*, the process leads to a cul-de-sac (Szczepaniak 2013: 233): “mit der Extension auf neue Controllergruppen verringert sich drastisch das

Inventar der möglichen Targets,”¹⁷¹ because these non-personified object controllers can only have non-agentive targets. This observation will be discussed in light of some complementary diachronic data below. With object controllers, personification is indeed guaranteed by the agency of their targets:

- (95) Auch die **Violine**, seine alte treue **Begleiterin** und **Trösterin** [...] machte also the violin.FEM his old loyal companion.F and consoler.F [...] made diesmal die Fußwanderung in leichtem Gewande von Wachsleinen mit. this.time the walk.on.foot in light garment of linen with
 ‘The violin, too, his old loyal companion and consoler, participated in the walk on foot in light linen garments.’

(von Holtei 1852: [HOLTEI], fiction)

- (96) Gedenken wir noch der Verluste, die wir uns durch eigene Zerstreuung commemorate we still the losses which we us through own distraction bereiten, so findet sich dieselbe **Brusttasche**, die wir schon als cause so finds itself the.same breast.pocket.FEM which we already as **Helfershelferin** der Taschendiebe ertappten, in ähnlicher Eigenschaft zu helper.F of.the pickpockets caught in similar fashion to Gunsten unehrlicher Finder thätig. favour of.unfair finders active
 ‘When we think about the losses, which were caused by our own absent-mindedness, then we find this very breast pocket, which we had already caught as the helper of pickpockets, to be active in favour of unrighteous finders in a similar fashion.’

(Michelis 1869: 52 [MICHELIS], functional literature)

As the previously introduced data demonstrates, concrete objects as controllers, as well as mass nouns and bounded abstracts, are rare overall. Within the realm of inanimate controllers, unbounded abstracts are most common. This is already true of medieval literature, and these are moreover concepts that are also regularly personified in the visual arts, because they express emotions, virtues, or vices. As concepts that are directly connected to human emotion and behaviour, they are thus relatively easily personified, and their personification

¹⁷¹“with the extension onto new controller groups, the inventory of possible targets is drastically reduced” [N.V.]

is in some way also metonymically motivated, whereby emotions and characteristics stand for their human holders. As a figure of style they have been traditionally often personified in literature and the visual arts. Moreover, as said, they are sometimes ambiguous between abstract and collective. Indeed, the shift from abstract to collective semantics is a well-documented diachronic process. According to Luraghi (2009: 6-8), the shift can be explained by the fact that collective nouns are an abstraction of the collection of count nouns that they replace. Much like mass nouns, collective nouns foreground a mass of abstracted entities, more so than the plural collection of single entities (Luraghi 2009: 6-7). Foregrounding concrete, single entities is the function of plural count nouns, which, should these features be contextually preferred, can replace collective nouns: *die CDU'ler; die CDU'ler und CDU'lerinnen* 'member of the CDU party' instead of the collective *die CDU* 'the CDU (party)', or *die Polizisten; die Polizisten und Polizistinnen* 'police officers' instead of *die Polizei* 'the police'. As these examples show, the use of a collective noun can serve as an *undoing-gender* alternative to concrete human referents, although naturally other usage reasons can apply. Lastly, in the context of collective nouns, it is worth noting that there is a long-standing connection between collectives and the feminine gender in Germanic, because the feminine gender originates in this domain of collective and abstract nouns (cf. Tichy 1993; Litscher 2009; Luraghi 2009 and Section 3.1). The fact that, of all classes beneath the animate pole on the Individuation Hierarchy, unbounded abstracts are overrepresented may also be related with the simple fact that in this class, most nouns are feminine.

Tangible objects, mass nouns, and bounded abstracts are less easily personified, although on the individuation scale they are closer to human beings than unbounded abstracts. There seems to be a "spillover" of feminisation to these contexts when the right criteria are met, i.e., in predominantly in agentive contexts, as in the examples (95-96) above. Agency is a prominent characteristic of referents at the top of the Individuation and Animacy Hierarchies. Hence, these are instances of the analogical use of feminisation on PNs in agentive contexts. Of all object, bounded abstract, and mass controllers, only a few appear in non-agentive contexts. The distribution of these controllers over (non-)agentive contexts is shown in Fig.

7.9. Targets as professional or function nouns are a separate category, such as *Priesterin* ‘priest.F’, *Richterin* ‘judge.F’, or *Dolmetscherin* ‘translator.F’:

- (97) Lern’t nun / was ich für eine Göttin bin / Mein Tempel ist Luft / Himmel /
 learn now / what I for a goddess am / my temple is air / heaven /
 Erde / Flutt. Ja die **Natur** selbst ist die **Priesterin** /
 Earth / tide yes the nature.FEM itself is the priestess.F
 ‘Learn now what kind of goddess I am. My temple is air, heaven, Earth, tide. Yes,
 nature itself is the priestess.’

(von Lohenstein 1689: 78 [LOHENSTEIN], fiction)

The occurrence of profession-noun targets has also been noted by Hennig (1991) in her analysis of Hugo von Trimberg’s *Der Renner* (MHG): *Bosheit ist ir kam’erinne* ‘malice is her chamberlain.F’ (Hennig 1991: 123). Looking at the distribution of these targets diachronically (Fig. 7.9), they are in fact an older feature.

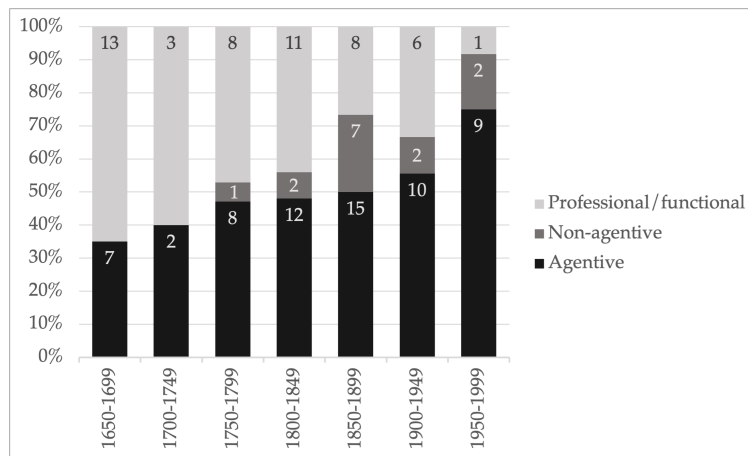


Figure 7.9: Agentive and non-agentive feminised targets of inanimate objects, bounded abstract, and mass controllers.

The non-agentive contexts in the data are relatively rare, with 14 instances in total, although whether they are truly non-agentive is sometimes unclear. One recurring feminised PN in non-agentive contexts is *Trägerin* ‘carrier.F’, which, because of the semantics of the underlying verb *tragen* ‘carry’ can be interpreted as agentive, but also has a passive interpretation in sentences like the following:

- (98) Die **Schrift** gilt ihm nur als Erinnerungszeichen, nicht als die
 The writing.FEM counts to.him only as reminder not as the
 eigentliche **Trägerin** der Weisheit, wie es die Rede ist.
 actual carrier.F of.the wisdom how it the ratio is
 ‘Writing to him is only a reminder, but not the actual carrier of wisdom; that is
 ratio.’

(Curtius 1875: 261 [CURTIUS], scientific literature)

A handful of occurrences are unambiguously non-agentive:

- (99) Wir haben schon früher erwähnt, dass Huyghens und Papin dabei beteiligt
 we have already earlier mentioned that Huyghens and Papin thereby involved
 waren und die **Pulvermaschine**, die **Vorgängerin** der Dampfmaschine,
 were and the.FEM powder.engine the predecessor.F of.the steam.engine
 erfanden, um das Wasser zu heben.
 invented to the water to lift
 ‘We have already mentioned earlier, that Huyghens and Papin were involved and
 invented the powder engine, the predecessor of the steam engine, to lift water.’

(Beck 1895: 1232 [BECK], scientific literature)

As Szczepaniak (2014: 216) also notes, in her examples, all controllers of this kind “denotieren unikale bzw. auffällige Gegenstände, so dass man annehmen kann, dass das *in*-Suffix auch in diesen Fällen nicht völlig desemantisiert ist.”¹⁷² The analysis of *-in* proposed here is also purely semantic. Note that the occurrence of non-agentive targets of object, mass and bounded abstract controllers coincides with the rise of collective nouns as controllers. Collective nouns do not need an agentive target. In fact, a vast proportion of collective controllers do not have an agentive target. Non-agentive targets of inanimate (non-collective) controllers could possibly be an analogical use of these targets, which remains rare over time. This, in combination with the fact that bounded object controllers are by no means a diachronically new phenomenon, refute the idea that they constitute a last step in the development of *-in* toward a formal gender marker. If anything, the use of *-in* is confined to any context

¹⁷²:[They all] denote unique or prominent objects, so that one can assume that the suffix *-in* is not completely desemantised in these instances.” [N.V.]

that shares semantic characteristics with human referents (through personification, agency, metonymic animacy). The pattern can therefore be viewed as analogically expanding onto contexts that allow for this expansion, with an analogically motivated spillover in less likely contexts. In this context of low individuation and feminisation, it is worth noting that “we recognize patterns even in the most difficult circumstances, when constrained to do so” (Fischer 2021: 324).

In line with the unlikely feminisation of items that are low in individuation or agency, mass nouns that are found in the data are rare. The most prominent mass noun is *Natur* ‘nature’, analysed as the sum of all natural phenomena and objects, and this noun alone accounts for 92.2% of all mass nouns as tokens (47 of 51 mass nouns). Other mass nouns are *Luft* ‘air’ (occurring twice), *Atmosphere* ‘atmosphere’, and *Benzoësäure* ‘benzoic acid’. Even rarer, and with most occurrences in 19th-century scientific literature, are animals as antecedents: *Katze* ‘cat’, *Schlange* ‘snake’, *Lerche* ‘lark’, *Nachtigall* ‘nightingale’, *Eule* ‘owl’, *Schnecke* ‘snail’, *Kuh* ‘cow’.

Although much less Dutch data is available, it seems that before the 20th century it is comparable to German data. In the first period, 1550-1699, the only collective is the noun (*hoofd*)*stad*:

- (100) Ende ooc inde **stadt** van Athenen (dwelc de moeder ende **voester** and also in.the.FEM city.FEM of Athens which the mother and nourisher.F was van alle sonderlinge consten) was den neam der Sophisten seer gehaet was of all extraordinary arts was the name.of.the sophists hated
 ‘And also in the city of Athens, which was the mother and the nourisher of all extraordinary arts, the name of the sophists was very much hated.’

(Erasmus 1597: 19v [ERASMUS], non-fiction)

Dutch data differs from German in that most personified concepts are perceived as negative and warned against in the data, or are recommended virtues: *dronkenschap* ‘drunkenness’, *overdaad* ‘excess’, *eerzucht* ‘ambition, avarice’, *jaloëzie* ‘jealousy’, *weelde* ‘wealth’, *nijd* ‘jealousy’, *vleierij* ‘flattery’, *hoererij* ‘fornication’; *matigheid* ‘moderation’, *armoede* ‘poverty’, *zedigheid* ‘modesty’. This may be explained by the fact that many sources are apparently

Catholic. Other antecedents enter the data in the 19th century, much like in the German data. Nouns such as *regering* ‘government’, *partij* ‘party’, *brigade* ‘brigade’, *gemeente* ‘municipality’, and *kerk* ‘church’ are the main collective contributors to the data. While earlier data is characterised by Catholic moralism, abstract concepts and objects in the 19th century are more centred on (natural) science, arts, and elements of nature (*rede* ‘ratio’, *dichtkunst* ‘poetry’, *kritiek* ‘criticism’, *aarde* ‘earth, dirt’, *lentemaand* ‘spring month’, *bloemaand* ‘month of blooming’, *rivier* ‘river’, *aurora* ‘aurora, northern light’), as well as labour (*vlijt* ‘diligence’, *landbouw* ‘agriculture’). Crucially, feminine gender, even in the nominative, is overtly marked until the second half of the 19th century in the Dutch data, which may motivate the occurrence of feminisation here. The customary use of feminisation in Dutch, as late as the 19th century, may thus be embedded in this artificial preservation of a masculine/feminine gender distinction (cf. also Section 6.2). By the 20th century, the data only contain five instances of feminisation in reference to an inanimate antecedent. Relative to corpus size, the occurrence of feminising morphology in inanimate contexts in Dutch decreases strongly in the 20th century. Four of the five controllers in this period are collective nouns: *bezetting* ‘occupation, the people who occupy’ (101), *Republiek* ‘republic’, *regering* ‘government’, and *overheid* ‘government’. One abstract noun, *werkelijkheid* ‘reality’, is left (102), and this is overtly marked as (historically) feminine by the suffix *-heid*.

- (101) Onder de bezetting is er nu nog iets anders, dat die vanitas
 Under the occupation is there now another something different that the vanity
 aankweekt, en de **kweekster** is de **bezetting** zelve: het is het
 cultivates and the cultivator.F is the occupation.UTR itself it is the
 bewustzijn dat men een gevaarlijk persoon is.
 consciousness that one a dangerous person is
 ‘Under the occupation, there is now yet something else which cultivates this vanity,
 and the cultivator is the occupation itself: it is being conscious of the fact that one
 is a dangerous person.’

(van de Woestijne 1916 [1992]: 287 [WOESTIJNE], non-fiction)

(102) Het is een **leidster** met zachtere handen en dieper inzicht dan de
 it is a guide.F with softer hands and deeper understanding than the
 Vader des Dichters. Het betreft hier dan ook de allerbitterste
 Father of.the Poet it concerns here than also the bitterest
werkelijkheid, die alle verbeelding tart.
 reality.UTR which all imagination defies
 ‘It is a guide with softer hands and deeper understanding than the Father of the
 Poet. This concerns the bitterest reality, which defies all imagination.’

(Helman 1940: 19 [HELMAN], non-fiction)

None of the five attestations in the Dutch corpus are younger than 1970: 1916, 1919, 1940, 1970 (2). The 1970 attestations stem from the same author, W. Schermerhorn, who was born in the late 19th century.¹⁷³ The different controllers found in the Dutch data are largely abstract concepts, though objects and mass nouns do appear in the data as well.

7.3.2 Contemporary data

21st-century data displays a very prominent difference between Dutch and German. First, a total of 187 constructions with a feminine inanimate antecedent and a feminised PN are found in the German 2021 corpus of about 216 million tokens, compared to only 23 constructions in the Dutch corpus of nearly 2.7 billion tokens. The relative occurrence of such constructions in the German corpus (0.86 PMT) is 143 times higher than in the Dutch corpus (0.006 PMT). Furthermore, in the German corpus these constructions contain 87 different antecedents, the vast majority of which (96%, cf. Table 7.1) are collective controllers. Some of these antecedents are also found in the corpus with non-feminised targets, although in total feminised nouns outnumber their non-feminised counterparts: 187 feminised targets versus 170 non-feminised targets. By comparison, the 828 non-feminised PNs in the Dutch corpus strongly outweigh the 23 feminised targets (of only eleven different controllers):

¹⁷³Cf. <https://www.dbnl.org/auteurs/auteur.php?id=sche115> [Accessed 05-11-2023].

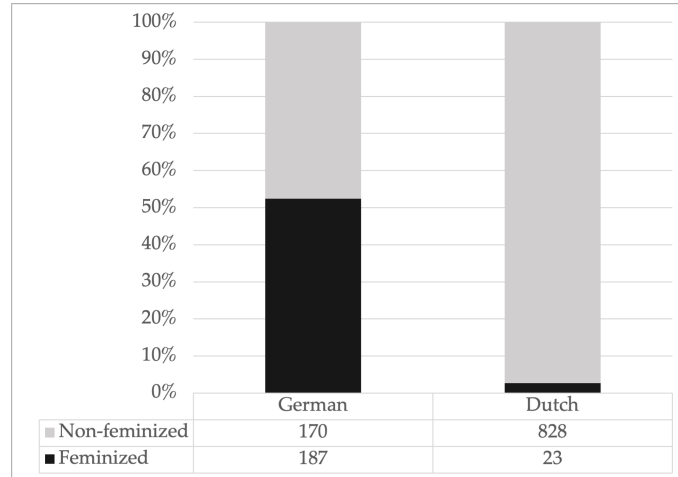


Figure 7.10: Feminised and non-feminised PNs with inanimate antecedents in contemporary German and Dutch data.

Szczepaniak (2023) notes that guidelines on gender-fair language use even recommend the use of *-in* in inanimate contexts. She therefore proposes that the indexicalisation of the suffix as a marker of liberal political views and gender-fair linguistic *habitus* is thereby extended onto *-in* in nonhuman contexts (Szczepaniak 2023: 188). This status of the suffix may further contribute to its expansion in inanimate contexts.

Returning to the controllers of these PNs, 58 (31.0%) in the German corpus are proper names such as political party names (*AfD*, *CDU*, *FDP*, *SPÖ*, *Lega*), company names (*SVP*, *Vonovia*, *Implenia*, *Telekom*), and feminine country names (*die Türkei* ‘Turkey’, *die Schweiz* ‘Switzerland’). *Landwirtschaft* ‘agriculture’ and *Privatwirtschaft* ‘private sector’ are ambiguous but leaning towards a collective reading. Note that both sources stem from Swiss websites:

- (103) So lange wird man auch die **Landwirtschaft** als **Klimasünderin** Nr. 1
 so long will one also the agriculture.FEM as climate.sinner.F n^o 1
 hinstellen.
 present
 ‘For an equally long time, agriculture will be presented as the number-one climate
 offender.’

(JSI 2021-03 [111948552], luternzeitung.ch)

- (104) Wieso vergisst der Staat in der Krise die **Privatwirtschaft** als **Partnerin**?
why forgets the state in the crisis the private.sector.FEM as partner.F
'Why does the state forget the private sector as a partner during the crisis?'

(JSI 2021-03 [8040806945], nzz.ch)

Further non-collective controllers with their corresponding targets in the German corpus are the following:

- (105) a. *die DNA als Wahrsagerin* 'DNA as a fortune teller'
b. *die Eiche als Gewinnerin* 'the oak tree as the winner'
c. *die Kernenergie als Retterin* 'nuclear energy as the rescuer'
d. *die Kultur als Wertevermittlerin* 'culture as an intermediary of values'
e. *die Natur als Lehrmeisterin* 'nature as a teacher'
f. *die Umwelt als Gewinnerin* 'the environment as the winner'

The first two are counted as tangible objects, and nature as a mass noun (but close to an abstract concept). Again, much like in historical data, non-collective antecedents are often natural phenomena found in scientific contexts. This is also true of Dutch data, which contains comparatively more objects as controllers, though this number is also strongly influenced by the very low total number of constructions found. Of the five occurrences of non-collective antecedents in Dutch data, *aarde* 'Earth' and *bloem* 'flower' occur twice, and *zon* 'sun' once. These controllers are also found in earlier sources. The feminisation of PNs in these contexts can be seen as a continuation of an already known usage. Use of collective controllers such as *gemeente* and *overheid* (cf. examples below) are also known since the 19th century.

- (106) a. *de Commissie als bewaakster/hoedster* 'the Commission as a guardian'
b. *de gemeente als draagster/werkgeefster* 'the municipality as the carrier/employer'
c. *de Kerk als (be)hoedster/bevorderaarster* 'the Church as the guardian/promotor'
d. *de overheid als hoedster/verleidster* 'the government as a guardian/seducer'

- e. *de PLO als vertegenwoordigster* ‘the PLO as the representative’
- f. *the politiek als vormgeefster* ‘politics as a shaper, desinger’
- g. *de universiteit als hoedster* ‘the university as a guardian’
- h. *de vennootschap als verweerster* ‘the company as a defendant’

Although the Dutch sample is small, with five non-collective controllers in a total of 23 constructions, the share of non-collective controllers is larger than in German. This supports the idea that in Dutch, rare occurrences for feminised PNs to inanimate referents are remnants of older uses.

From a theoretical perspective, it could be expected that, notwithstanding the small dataset, Belgian data is overrepresented in the sample. Nevertheless, the five Belgian constructions in the Dutch corpus coincide with the percentage value of Belgian Dutch texts in the corpus. The JSI 2014-2021 and the nlTenTen14 corpus together contain 19.2% Belgian texts and 72.3% Dutch texts. The five Belgian constructions in the sample make up 21.7% of the 23 constructions, while the Dutch constructions make up 73.9%.¹⁷⁴ As seen in the previous chapter, Flemish news media have also significantly lowered the use of *-ster* in animate contexts: its occurrence dropped from nearly 100% in contexts in which it could possibly occur before 1950 to a little over 30% after 2016 (cf. Section 6.2.2). Hence, their even scarcer appearance in inanimate contexts is unsurprising. Although differentiation of the masculine and feminine grammatical genders is still somewhat more transparent in Southern Dutch varieties, written standard language use does not distinguish the masculine from the feminine gender anymore. Unlike German data, Dutch data only contains one instance of a proper name as a controller. While the German article *die* in political parties, companies, or countries (e.g., *die SPÖ*) serves as a marker of its feminine gender, all Dutch data contains the utrum article *de*, and in the case of proper names there is no further feminine gender cue.¹⁷⁵ The proper name *PLO* is an abbreviation in which there is no overt gender marker visible; it is only secondarily retrieved through knowledge about what the O stands for

¹⁷⁴There is one .com top level domain source.

¹⁷⁵In the case of nouns such as *overheid* ‘government’ and *universiteit* ‘university’, feminine gender is conditioned formally through the suffixes *-heid* and *-teit*, respectively.

(*Organisation in Palestine Liberation Organisation*). Hence, for gender marking on nouns with an inanimate antecedent, transparent gender marking and historical-traditional use of certain referents in these contexts seem to be necessary conditions.

7.4 Summary

Allegorical personification of concepts and objects is a literary stylistic feature that is subject to preference and occasion or epoch. Metonymically motivated feminisation is a newer phenomenon, and it follows the resemanticisation process of the German gender system as sex-based. Collective nouns metonymically stand for human beings within the collective, and hence, feminisation of the targets of collective controllers takes place in analogy to feminisation in animate contexts. Feminisation remains semantically motivated. There are some rare instances of feminisation in the context of bounded objects, bounded abstracts, or mass nouns on targets that are non-agentive in German. However, these are very uncommon, because they are instances of an analogical spillover to unlikely contexts: they are first attested when collective controllers are on the rise, and collective controllers commonly have non-agentive targets. Thus, the non-agentive pattern of targets of collective controllers may serve as a template for the non-agentive targets of other inanimate controllers. Because they are low in individuation and thus far from human semantics, such controllers are rare. Crucially, they are not instances of formal gender marking, but rather an analogical overflow of feminisation onto unlikely contexts, as pattern recognition in “difficult circumstances” (Fischer 2021: 324). Collective nouns are semantically connected with unbounded abstracts (cf. Luraghi 2009: 6-8), which are lowest on the Individuation Hierarchy. It can be seen that the rise of collective controllers is accompanied by many ambiguous instances, in which a noun can either be interpreted as a collective or as an unbounded abstract. A similar development is found in Dutch, where feminisation in inanimate contexts runs parallel to German for as long as a grammatical masculine/feminine distinction is (artificially) upheld. A schematic presentation of feminisation in inanimate contexts is diachronically proposed in Fig. 7.11, as an elaboration of the Individuation Hierarchy. It demonstrates that there is a semantic

overlap between some of the nouns that are lowest in individuation (unbounded abstracts) and nouns that are metonymically a set of human beings (collectives). The feminisation of PNs in reference to all other inanimate classes (animals, bounded objects and abstracts, mass nouns) is nearly completely restricted to personified contexts, in which the controller is personified as one single human being.

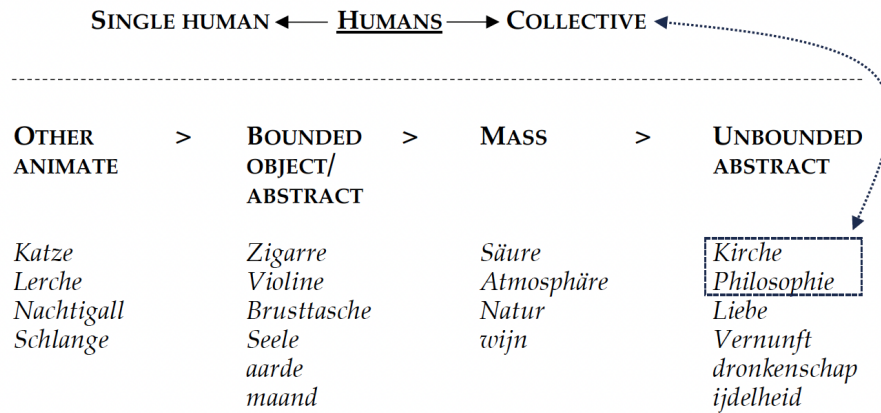


Figure 7.11: Personification processes represented by the Animacy Hierarchy.

Since written Dutch no longer makes use of grammatical masculine/feminine distinction, i.e., since the early 20th century, the use of feminisation in inanimate contexts has nearly vanished. In 21st-century data, the number of constructions found with a PN in *-ster* in inanimate reference is negligible. In German, on the other hand, nearly all occurrences have a collective controller – pointing to the fact that *-in* is a semantic agreement marker in all (primarily or secondarily) human contexts – and feminisation is slightly preferred over its omission in these contexts. Dutch instances can be seen as singular remnants from older phases, since targets of collective controllers such as *gemeente* ‘municipality’ and object controllers such as *zon* ‘sun’ have been feminised for centuries.

8 Conclusion and outlook

The starting point of the present study was an observation that feminisation, the marking of female sex on PNs, is sometimes or often omitted in Dutch, whereas its omission appears to be rare in German. To adequately describe and explain this contrast, three corpus-based case studies were conducted. The results of these studies confirm the informal observation that feminisation has contrasting facets: its use is in a process of decline in Dutch, while its use in German can be defined in terms of high realised and low potential productivity. In other words, based on the data in the case studies, German feminisation has nearly completely saturated its onomasiological market (cf. Baayen 2009: 902) in female, human reference, and is even expanding in inanimate reference. Factors exerting influence on the use or omission of feminising morphology are heterogeneous and found both system-internally and -externally. Alongside a variety of semantic and pragmatic factors – animacy, individuation, and referentiality – its connection with grammatical gender contributes to the synchronic complexity of feminisation systems. Its status as a point of discussion in debates concerning gender-fair language use is a major influence as well. How frequently feminising morphology is used is thus dependent on a set of competing motivations which have the aim of either enhancing or reducing it. Resulting structural tendencies also have implications for the intrasystemic status of feminisation. As a highly productive and relatively stable, or even expanding phenomenon, it behaves inflection-like in the gray zone between word formation and inflection. As a process with reduced productivity and thus a reduced scope of application, it migrates toward opaque morphology in lexicalised items. Crucially, the inflectional property in question is not formally motivated (i.e., feminisation morphemes as abstract gender agreement markers in contextual inflection), but takes the shape of inherent inflection, which is morphosemantically determined (Booij 1993; Marzi et al. 2020). The marking of female sex on a PN is by definition semantically and referentially motivated, that is, by the female sex of the referent. This is called – in varying terminology – semantic, conceptual, or notional agreement. When this marking occurs in all female contexts, there is a “systematic covariance” (Steele 1978: 610) between the referent’s sex and the use

of the morpheme, which leads to its functional migration toward inherent inflection. The case studies in this work have concretely focused on various characteristics of prototypical inflection and prototypical lexicality to assess the current status of feminisation in Dutch and German. The most successful criterion that distinguishes inflection from derivation, in a graded way, is the functional notion of obligatoriness (cf. Bybee 1985: 81), although formal criteria (e.g., affix distribution, fusion, allomorphy) also apply. Obligatoriness is the term used for the functional consequence of systematic agreement patterns, namely, that the fixation of a pattern on a semantic feature (in this context, female sex) forces the language user to make use of the corresponding morphology in these semantic contexts.

This study has necessarily involved a theoretical and thereby methodological shift, from a structuralist description of feminisation that normatively accentuates semantic markedness of feminised items (cf. Motschenbacher 2010: 94), to a poststructuralist approach, which provides scope for viewing feminisation as a system in flux, influenced by the above-mentioned factors. By underlining crosslinguistic differences, and diachronic and synchronic change and variation, the view on feminisation can thus necessarily be “de-essentialised” (Motschenbacher 2016). This theoretical approach is usage-based and embedded in the theory of Emergent Grammar (Hopper 1987), which accentuates the role of frequency that was already underlined by Hermann Paul (1880) in 19th century, but was long factored out in formal linguistics. Frequency of use (reiteration) in certain contexts leads to the sedimentation of (parts of) these contexts in a linguistic form – analogy-driven token-to-type interdiscursivity, in Silverstein’s (2005) wording. Analogical extensions of a form onto similar contexts is in principle always possible, but can be more or less probable. Extension through analogy, which increases token frequency, happens when the right conditions are met, and it was these conditions that were investigated here. Applied to feminisation, this means that frequent use of feminising morphology in [+female] contexts leads to the sedimentation of these semantics in feminised items only, while non-feminised items increasingly migrate toward exclusively [+male] semantics by implication. Conversely, frequent use of non-feminised items in [+female] contexts allows for these semantics to take root in non-feminised forms. The latter

case would be an instance of semantic markedness, i.e., an asymmetrical semantic relation between the non-feminised item and its feminised version. Importantly, frequency of use, i.e., of the occurrence of a form in a context, results from underlying motivating factors. An item does not “randomly” become frequent in a certain context, and this is shown through the example of feminisation. The abstract structure for this process and development with regard to feminisation can be summarised as follows: various factors (gender system, animacy, individuation, referentiality, language policy etc.) motivate the use or omission of feminising morphology. The interplay of these factors thus motivates the frequency of use of feminising morphology, as well as how it is used, i.e., in which contexts. Frequency and mode of use in turn display prototypical characteristics of either inflectional or lexical items. This results in the form of feminisation in a system as either inflection-like morphology or as features of lexicalised units. In emphasising the crucial role of frequency in language change and thus structure emergence, usage-based perspectives entail corpus-based research. The way in which this process functions for the contrastive feminisation systems investigated corpus-linguistically, is summarised in the following paragraphs.

8.1 Results

The first case study aimed at describing formal properties of feminisation from a contrastive perspective, using corpus data from various text genres. It found that feminisation is not formally absolute, and morphological markedness of the feminised item in relation to its non-feminised version is not always a given. The German system is formally straightforward in that the suffix *-in* is by far the most productive pattern. Under “most productive” is understood the realised productivity of a pattern as its absolute type count in comparison to other competing patterns. This domination of *-in* over any other feminising pattern was confirmed in the second corpus study, which demonstrated that it is the pattern in about 98% of all feminised items. Loan words such as *Friseur* ‘hairdresser.F’ and *Souffleuse* ‘prompter.F’, which at first contain a loan feminising suffix, adapt to the native German system over time by taking *-in*. The most productive Dutch pattern overall is *-ster*, and

the only other pattern that has become gradually productive is *-e*. Productivity degrees of all other patterns have stagnated over time. Of note is *-in*, which has seen a wide-ranging context expansion in German, while in Dutch it has remained in its niche context of deriving feminised nouns from masculine PNs. It therefore only occurs in old nouns in Dutch, of which the non-feminised version is (almost) never neutralised in female contexts. This is further explained by its older occurrence as an onymic pattern. While in German *-in* has expanded its scope to (nearly) all masculine PNs – presumably also for a lack of alternative competing morphemes – feminisation patterns in Dutch are distributed over various functional domains. The suffix *-ster*, for instance, is typical of agentive PNs (*speelster* ‘player.F’), whereas in German *-in* is also the default suffix in these contexts (*Spielerin* ‘player.F’). The pattern *-ster* is of particular interest in countering a theory of (morphological) markedness, because it exists parallel to its counterparts in *-er*, which it substitutes (it is only added to *-aar* and *-ier*). This is reminiscent of compounding, by which feminised PNs are formed using a lexeme such as *vrouw/Frau* ‘woman’ or *zuster/Schwester* ‘sister’. These results have a number of implications for the theoretical groundwork laid out in the preceding chapters, mainly with respect to formal analyses of feminisation. First, the idea that feminised PNs are formally marked versus non-feminised PNs must be refuted based on the existence, and sometimes relatively high productivity degrees, of certain feminisation patterns that do not attach to, but substitute masculine PN endings. The Dutch suffix *-ster* is the most prominent example, next to the German suffix *-in* that substitutes *-e* in weak masculines, but also the fact that feminisation through compounding has been on the rise in the past centuries. Considering the formal characteristics of Dutch feminising patterns, it was demonstrated that they are more prototypically lexical, while in German they are more prototypically inflectional and approach the status of inherent inflection. Base allomorphy is one such example, which occurs in the case of suffix substitution and is thus typical of the most productive Dutch pattern *-ster*, but also the phonological and prosodic structures of Dutch feminising patterns: they are often more phonologically complex (*-ster*, for example is more complex than *-in*), and to this is added the fact that most of them are stressed (Dutch *-in*, for example, is stressed,

while German *-in* is not). The fact that the German suffix *-in* is the only dominant pattern and extremely productive (cf. the second case study as well), adds to its transparency, which is another characteristic of prototypical inflection. Derivation allows for allomorphy, which is the case in the Dutch feminisation system. Lastly, derivational patterns are known to change the word class of the words they adhere to, and this is true of *-ster*, but not of *-in*. On the formal side, German feminisation is best described in terms of inherent inflection, while Dutch feminisation and its many faces are typical of derivation.

The second case study was the main corpus study. It was concerned with the functional side of feminisation, rather than the formal. In this study, the focal point was an assessment of the obligatoriness of feminisation in Dutch and German, which is heavily influenced by the gender system and language policies. Obligatoriness regarding the use of feminising morphology springs from frequency of use and implies that the relation between non-feminised and feminised items is symmetric (equipollent). Obligatory marking of feminising morphology was analysed as the functional predecessor of semantic agreement. Because there is a systematic covariation between female sex and female sex markers, obligatoriness “force[s] certain choices upon the speaker” (Bybee 1985: 81), i.e., the obligatory choice for or against female gender marking. It was hypothesised that the German feminisation pattern *-in* is a morpheme that can best be attributed the status of inherent inflection in that it (nearly) always occurs in female contexts, at the expense of neutralised masculine PNs. The corpus study was therefore based on newspaper data, because (some) newspapers are known to maintain gender-fair language usage policies. In the case study, the Dutch and German language areas were both subdivided into two regions: Dutch into a northern and a southern region, in line with differences in the gender systems and variable use of neutralisation policies; German into an eastern and a western region for the period 1946-1990, in line with a variable view on differentiation and neutralisation in the GDR and the FRG. The occurrence of feminising morphology in predicative contexts was investigated in the study, which covered news media data from the founding dates of the different sources until 2020. The dataset encompassed nearly two centuries of Dutch and 75 years of German textual sources. Predicative contexts

are especially suitable for tracking diachronic developments within a feminisation system, because when feminisation becomes less common, changes should be best traceable in predicative, non-referential contexts. Their frequent occurrence in these contexts consequently points to feminisation being the preferred (or even obligatory) pattern. This can be shown on the pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy,¹⁷⁶ where predicating contexts are less likely to require conceptual agreement than referent-tracking contexts. The investigated predicative constructions carrying personal nouns has the forms [*zij/ze is een NP*] in Dutch, and [*sie ist N*] in German. Neither construction contains masculine or feminine gender information: the Dutch construction contains an indefinite article (*een*), mainly for practical reasons, but there is no masculine/feminine gender distinction on the article. The German construction is articleless, thereby maximally lowering the interference of a gender effect that would adhere to the German article. Such occurrences of PNs are thus least likely to be feminised, not only because they are non-referential, but also because there is no grammatical gender information linked with feminisation (German feminised PNs being bound to the article feminine *eine*).

It was found that the differences between Dutch and German are significant from the second half of the 20th century onwards, although within Dutch, the difference between Northern and Southern data has also been significant in the past decades. There is a clear downward tendency in the use of feminising morphology particularly in the Northern Dutch data, starting in the 1960s, with highly significant boosts in the 1980s and again after 2016. Both of these coincide with neutralisation policies coming into effect. Although nearly every feminisation pattern has lost much of its productivity in Dutch and Flemish newspapers, Flemish data shows a reluctance to neutralise PNs feminised by *-e*. In Flemish news media, this has led to an asymmetry in feminisation of native and non-native PNs: *-ster* and *-e* are in fact complementarily distributed over native and non-native PNs, respectively, and only *-e* is preserved. Further crucial factors that could be deduced from the results were, first, the level of accessibility of the referent: since the use of feminising morphology in Dutch newspapers is decreasing, there is a significant preference of feminising morphemes to occur

¹⁷⁶Agreement being semantic agreement of the referent's female sex with the feminising morpheme.

in contexts with a full pronoun *zij* ‘she’ over contexts with a reduced pronoun *ze*. The full pronoun is typical of contexts with a less accessible referent, and thus feminisation can be analysed as an instrument for reference tracking here. Second, the semantics of feminised PNs play a relevant role. Feminised PNs are likely to occur in the semantic field of sports, as well as inhabitant names, which even have their own feminisation pattern, namely the de-adjectival *-se*. With respect to German feminisation, it was found that the system has remained stable over time, and even shows tendencies to avoid inconsistencies within the system by feminising new non-native nouns as well. The only exception is GDR data, which is significantly different from FRG data between 1946 and 1990. Although neutralisation occurred significantly more often than in FRG data during that time, only about one fourth of PNs, at most, is ever neutralised in GDR data. Concerning the type of PNs that are neutralised, it was concluded that non-feminised items as a rule were relatively young PNs, which were not established as feminised items by the time the GDR was founded, and were unique to female GDR inhabitants. This meant that only in the GDR, and not in the FRG, did a significant share of women participate in the professional contexts to which these nouns belonged (e.g. *Agitator* ‘agitator.F’, *Metalloge* ‘metallurgist.F’ etc.). Non-feminised nouns were thus relatively young PNs that did not usually have female referents and were often relevant to the GDR politically and/or economically. Returning to Dutch, it was found that the cut-off point of conceptual agreement of the referent’s female sex with a feminising morpheme in Northern Dutch newspapers is currently approximately between predication and reference tracking. This is the result of a shift on the pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy, taking place since ca. 1960 (cf. Fig. 8.1). In Southern Dutch data, the cut-off point is not quite there yet, as more than half of PNs are still feminised in predicative contexts in 2020. In the German system, feminisation is the default in all referential contexts. All in all, through the empirical study of contrastive and diachronic data, the long-term effects of gender and language policy could decidedly be confirmed.

This second case study also has a number of theoretical implications, and it weighs in to the debate on gender-fair language use. The Dutch feminisation paradigm contains many

gaps, and these lacking forms are prototypical of derivation. It was shown that gaps are continuously (analogically) filled in German, with prominent items being loan words. The German system thereby meets the semantic obligatoriness criterion, which consolidates its position as inherent inflection. Since the use of feminisation, notably *-in*, is so all-encompassing in all [+human,+female] contexts, feminisation has come to cover the domain of female reference completely. This in turn means that non-feminised PNs have become increasingly bound to non-female contexts, and their generic potential thereby decreases. Concerning the question of semantic markedness, which is often used as an argument against the use of “gendered” language from a structuralist perspective, this case study clearly indicates that in German, feminised and non-feminised items in the singular are each other’s functional equals. As the Dutch system displays the opposite tendencies, the Dutch and German feminisation systems, pertaining to two closely related languages, are currently in a process of divergence. This case study was able to considerably contribute to the understanding of the interrelation between sex marking and grammatical gender, as well as the influence of language policies on language change. It has thereby filled a decades-old empirical gap in gender linguistics and endorses psycholinguistic findings on the interpretation and processing of (non-)feminised forms from a usage-based perspective – which has in turn proven a successful theoretical approach.

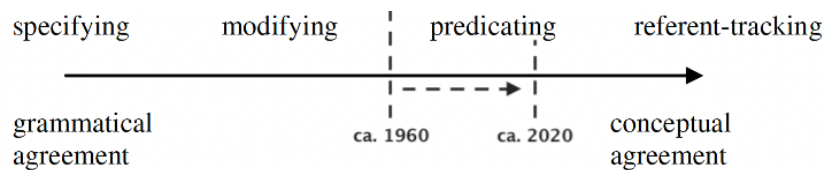


Figure 8.1: Cut-off point of feminisation as semantic agreement in Dutch diachronically on the pragmatics-based Agreement Hierarchy (Köpcke, Panther & Zubin 2010: 179).

The observation that German feminisation by *-in* also occurs in nonhuman contexts led to the third and last case study, which investigates whether such occurrences have any implications for the grammatical status of German feminisation. This implication would be a shift from the assumed inherent-inflection status toward a fully grammatical, purely

formally motivated contextual-inflection status.

The clearest influence of grammatical gender on the preservation of feminisation, and even its relation with sex, becomes visible when looking at the occurrence of feminisation in contexts that are inanimate, but in which the inanimate referent is denoted by a grammatically feminine noun. From a contemporary, synchronic perspective, the difference between Dutch and German with respect to feminisation is most visible in the inanimate domain. It was established that the German gender system is sex-based (Corbett 2013): in the realm of animacy, the semantic core of the gender system is sex. This means that the notion of animacy must play a vital role in the process of feminisation in inanimate contexts that are grammatically feminine. Some authors (Scott 2009b,a; Szczepaniak 2013, 2014) had established that feminised nouns in inanimate contexts prefer collective controllers in the 20th century. This is also true of the rare instances found in Dutch. Collective controllers are closely linked to human semantics, because they denote collectives of human beings. Looking at the diachronic development of feminisation in these areas in ENHG (starting 1650) and MoD (starting 1550), it becomes clear that the context is either metonymically personified by the collective controller, or that a concept or object is personified allegorically. In either case, human semantics play a role. The prevalence of collective controllers is a fact since the 19th century, and this constitutes a shift on the Individuation Hierarchy (an elaboration of the inanimate pole of the Animacy Hierarchy). Personification of bounded objects and abstract concepts is a figure of style that was popular in medieval literature and has since then known some limited resurgences. Crucially, it is based on grammatical gender, which gives way to sex interpretations when the context shifts from inanimate to animate reference (a cognitive process referred to as *thinking for speaking* cf. Slobin 1987, 1996). A shift towards more collective controllers can be seen by analyzing the different occurrences of feminisation in contexts that are ambiguous between abstract and collective readings. Indeed, the connection between the abstract and collective has been emphasised before (cf. Luraghi 2009). The shift takes place in non-fiction texts, which is likely due to the texts' referents in political and economic domains. In contemporary data, textual contexts are

also mostly political mostly political, economic, and business-oriented. Comparing the occurrence of feminising morphology after feminine controllers in German with the frequencies of non-feminised nouns after feminine controllers, a slight preference for feminisation can be discerned. In a little over half of occurrences, feminisation of the PN occurs. Szczepaniak (2023) notes that in recent years, this use of feminising morphology has even been advised in guidelines on gender-fair language use, thereby further advancing the use of German *-in* as an indexical marker. The use of German *-in* in contexts that are only secondarily animate can be regarded as a result of its analogical expansion onto contexts that are similar, but not equal to the default function of *-in* (human reference).

In sum, feminisation in German is a system that shows clear inflection-like tendencies (in what Booij (1993) calls inherent inflection). It is the default in highly referential, lowly or non-referential contexts, and even the majority feature in reference to inanimates. The observation that feminisation in Dutch is a highly inconsistent process could be confirmed empirically and we can therefore conclude that two originally similar systems have evolved to assume a very different status in – again – two similar language systems that differ in one crucial aspect, the gender system.

8.2 Outlook

The way in which feminisation functions as part of a standardised language system has been described and explained. This has an advantage in that it allows for tracking developments within a writing system that is dependent on (changing) norms and guidelines, which are sometimes well-documented and published by different news media sources. Moreover, newspapers are practical research databases, because corresponding corpora are often readily accessible and searchable. Most of the written texts that were investigated here have thus been redacted in line with relevant language policies. It was demonstrated that text genre can influence the use of feminising morphology, e.g., the productivity degree of the pattern *-in* in Dutch is directly proportional to the informality of the register, while *-e* is directly proportional to its formality. The concrete use of feminisation in different text types, espe-

cially in Dutch, is still open for research. Spoken data would be particularly interesting to investigate.

With regards to the different referential and syntactic constellations in which feminising morphology can occur in PNs, this study focused on their occurrence in predicative constructions. In line with theory concerning referentiality, such constructions turned out to be practical carriers of (non-)feminised PNs when investigating either their stagnating use or their increasing use. Further research could take feminisation in referential contexts into account, and here, Dutch would be the main point of interest as well. It was indicated in Section 6.2.2 that in referential contexts, feminisation is still preferred for items which are usually non-feminised in non-referential contexts in Dutch. These first results could be investigated in a larger frame.

Lastly, all instances of feminisation investigated in this study focused on PNs in third-person reference, both in the context of human referents and in the context of personified or collective referents. A first corpus-based look at feminisation in female self-reporting by Kopf (2023) has already disclosed that feminisation in German is somewhat less likely to occur in first-person than in third-person reference. Here, a link with referentiality and referent-tracking is not unlikely: third-person reference presumably calls for more linguistic referent-tracking devices than first-person reference. In a similar fashion, in the domain of generically intended pronouns (e.g., generic *hij* ‘he’) in Dutch, Redl (2020) has demonstrated in various experimental studies that women tend to interpret masculine pronouns as more semantically generic than men. Both findings suggest that various personal aspects and attitudes of language users, and the perspective from which they use language, also affect the use of feminisation. Because the study of feminisation from a corpus-linguistic perspective is still new, these subjects are some of the aspects of feminisation that are still open for further research in this domain.

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Zusammenfassung

In der vorliegenden Arbeit wurden das deutsche und niederländische Movierungssystem kontrastiv, diachron und korpuslinguistisch untersucht. Die korpusbasierte Herangehensweise beinhaltet einen theoretischen und methodologischen Wechsel von einem strukturalistischen Ansatz hin zu einer poststrukturalistischen, gebrauchsbasierten Perspektive. Dies ermöglicht eine facettenreiche Analyse der unterschiedlichen Movierungssysteme, die sowohl die unterschiedlichen Genussysteme des Niederländischen und Deutschen berücksichtigt, als auch den Einfluss mehrerer semantischer und pragmatischer Faktoren und den Effekt unterschiedlicher Auffassungen hinsichtlich des geschlechtergerechten Sprachgebrauchs in den beiden Sprachräumen. So spielen die Semantik movierter Personenbezeichnungen, das Konzept der Belebtheit und die Referenzialität eine zentrale Rolle. Strategien des geschlechtergerechten Sprachgebrauchs beinhalten entweder Differenzierung, die explizite Markierung des Geschlechts, oder Neutralisierung, die Vermeidung movierter Formen. Das Ziel der Arbeit war es, die unterschiedlichen Movierungssysteme zu untersuchen und herauszufinden, wie die genannten inner- und außersprachlichen Faktoren interagieren und die Weiterentwicklung der Movierung im Niederländischen und Deutschen beeinflussen. In drei Case Studies wurde die Movierung bezüglich ihrer Form und Funktion kontrastiv untersucht. Formal sowie funktional ist die niederländische Movierung ein komplexes System, die deutsche aber sehr einheitlich. Es wurde beobachtet, dass die Movierung im Niederländischen spätestens seit dem 20. Jahrhundert starken Restriktionen unterliegt. Im Gegensatz dazu geht die Tendenz im Deutschen in die andere Richtung, nämlich zu einer Verfestigung des Movierungssystems in allen weiblichen Kontexten, mit Ausnahme des Sprachgebrauchs in Zeitungen in der ehemaligen DDR. Des Weiteren hat das deutsche Movierungssystem, im Gegensatz zum Niederländischen, starke Flexionszüge angenommen, die in der Literatur als inhärente Flexion bekannt sind. Das Niederländische Movierungssystem befindet sich eindeutig im Abbau. Signifikante Einflussfaktoren sind Genussystem (Movierung tritt hauptsächlich auf, wenn eine grammatische Maskulinum/Femininum-Distinktion vorhanden ist), Referenzialität (Movierung ist ein wichtiges Instrument des *reference tracking*), Semantik (bei Movierungsabbau bleiben Reste in semantischen Bereichen, die das soziale Geschlecht hervorheben, übrig), und das niederländische Movierungssystem kennt einen wichtigen und deutlich sichtbaren Effekt verschiedener Neutralisierungsstrategien.

Abstract

In the present study, feminisation (the marking of female sex on personal nouns) in Dutch and German is investigated contrastively, diachronically, and corpus-linguistically. The corpus-based approach entails a theoretical and methodological shift from a structuralist approach to a poststructuralist, usage-based perspective. This allows for a diverse analysis of the different feminisation systems, which takes the differing gender systems of Dutch and German into account, as well as the influence of various semantic and pragmatic factors, and the effect of diverging views on gender-fair language use in both language areas. In the semantic-pragmatic domain, the semantics of personal nouns, animacy and referentiality play a crucial role. Gender-fair language strategies may entail either differentiation strategies, i.e., the marking of sex morphology on every personal noun, or neutralisation strategies, i.e., the conscious omission of feminisation. The goal was to investigate the feminisation systems, and to find out how the aforementioned intra- and extralinguistic factors interact and influence the development of the respective feminisation systems. In three case studies, feminisation was investigated contrastively with regards to its form and function. Both formally and functionally, Dutch feminisation is a complex system, whereas the German one is more uniform. It was observed that feminisation in Dutch has been restricted since at least the 20th century. By contrast, the tendency in German goes in a different direction, namely, toward a fixation of the feminisation system in all female contexts, with the exception of language use in GDR newspapers. Furthermore, as opposed to the Dutch feminisation system, the German system has taken on inflectional properties, which are known in the literature as inherent inflection. The Dutch system is in a course of reduction. Significant impacting factors are the gender system (feminisation is connected with a preserved masculine/feminine gender distinction), referentiality (feminisation is an important *referent-tracking* instrument), semantics (in the case of reduction of feminisation, remnants of it are observed in semantic contexts which foreground social gender), and the Dutch feminisation system has been subject to a significant effect of various neutralisation strategies.

Selbstständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die von mir vorgelegte Arbeit selbständig abgefasst habe und dass ich keine weiteren Hilfsmittel verwendet habe als diejenigen, die im Vorfeld explizit zugelassen und von mir angegeben wurden. Stellen in der Arbeit, die dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach anderen Werken (dazu zählen auch Internetquellen) entnommen sind, wurden unter Angabe der Quelle kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit ist in keinem früheren Promotionsverfahren angenommen oder abgelehnt worden.

Mir ist bewusst, dass Verstöße gegen die Grundsätze der Selbstständigkeit als Täuschung betrachtet und entsprechend der Promotionsordnung geahndet werden.

Berlin, 18.12.2023